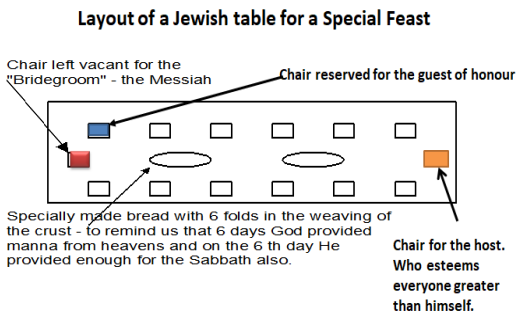
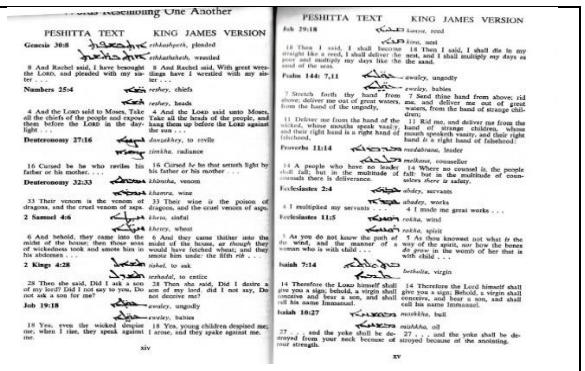


Layout for the Jewish Feast in Israel, 1995



Mistakes in the King James Bible, 1611

Graduation celebration at a Christian school in Pakistan, 2017

Proclaimed Pentecost Sunday, 1606

Fragments of the Temple Scrolls - 1995

Front page News Dagen Press (Sweden) 1981

Foundation ceremony of a new school Chuk 75 B, near Mianwali, 1981

Dedication of new Church Building near the Mekong River, Thailand, 1986

TEACHINGS & SERMONS: EXTRACTS FROM OVER THE LAST 60 YEARS ~ AS A MISSIONARY: VOLUME 2

By
Rev. Dr Jeffry David Camm

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DEDICATION

This commentary is dedicated to my wife, Rani, who has been my soulmate and my encouragement for these last 39 years, as we have travelled and preached in many nations. There have been many good experiences, (and some not so good ones), but throughout these travelling adventures for the Lord, He has always been faithful; He is a person whom we have come to trust, in ALL situations ~ in the good, the bad and the ugly.

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FOREWORD:

This book is volume 2 of sermons and teachings that I have compiled over the last 60 years, as a missionary in 43 nations, where I assisted in planting 39 churches, where no churches previously existed. We are now blessed to see their children and grandchildren actively involved in churches in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. Where the sermons have also been video-taped and stored, that link is also provided.

CHAPTER 1: HEARING FROM GOD – PART 1

Introduction

From the time of CREATION, God Almighty has been speaking to us, as an audible voice, through His written word - and through His Holy Spirit.

a) When God speaks – things happen - check out Genesis chapter 1:1-3 in the Living Bible: *"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was at first a shapeless, chaotic mass, with the Spirit of God (the Holy Spirit) brooding over the dark vapours. Then God said: "Let there be Light" and light appeared".*
b) Each time God spoke in Genesis chapter 1, miracles of creation were brought into existence.
c) It is the SPOKEN Word of God, which enables the power of God to be released.

1. God spoke to Adam & Eve

a) **God talked to Adam & Eve** in the Garden every day and both of them knew and recognised His voice.
b) If you do a search of the scriptures, you will find that the words "God said" appears 3605 times in the Bible, clearly indicating that God speaks to us continually – but most of the time, we don't listen, because we have forgotten ***"how to hear"*** – or we don't ***"recognize His voice"*** in the first place.
c) If we don't know ***"how to listen"*** then we will never hear the voice of God speaking directly to us.
d) There are many records throughout the Bible where God spoke directly to individuals and as a result of them:
    a. Hearing the voice;
    b. Recognizing that the voice was real (not just their imagination);
    c. Recognizing that it was God Almighty speaking to them;
    d. Not the voice of Satan, coming to cause confusion and deception in their life;
    e. Mighty things came to pass in their individual lives and in the lives of the nations around them.

2. **Noah heard from God**
   a) He commenced to build the ark, which took him and his family over 120 years to complete.
   b) He suffered ridicule and persecution from those around him, but he continued to follow God's calling on his life and he, his wife, his three children and their wives, were all saved from the flood, to start a new generation of people to serve God Almighty.
3. **Abraham (a Gentile) heard from God.**
   a) He left his family and all of his relatives and journeyed to a place he was told to go by God.
   b) His obedience to God's voice was deemed by God to be as righteousness.
4. **Moses (raised in the palace of the Pharaoh) heard from God.**
   a) Moses was not sure what God wanted him to do, so he questioned God, to make sure he understood clearly the tasks that God was setting before him.
   b) Here was a man destined to be a prince of Egypt in the "worldly sense", now chosen to become a "prince for God" to go to Pharaoh and say: *"God said: Let my people go"*
   c) For the next 40 years God talked to Moses and gave him answers to his questions and as a result, he governed the nation of Israel wisely in the wilderness.
5. **Joshua heard from God.**
   a) From the time that Moses died, God spoke to Joshua and gave him guidance and wisdom to lead and govern the people, the nation of Israel.
6. **Samuel heard from God (as a child & for the remainder of his life)**
   a) When Samuel was still a child he heard from God, but he thought it was Eli, the High priest calling to him, so in obedience he went to Eli and asked what he wanted. Eli replied that he had not called him.
   b) **<u>This happened three times!</u>**
      a. *Notice that God does not give up on you if you do not respond to Him, the first time He calls out your name, – he calls and calls until you answer.*
   c) Now Eli, the high priest, recognised that God Almighty was calling to Samuel, so he told him to go and lie down again and the next time he hears this voice, to answer as follows: "Yes, Lord I am listening".
   d) Then the Lord spoke to Samuel: as is recorded in 1 Samuel 1:11 ***"I am going to do a shocking thing in Israel. I am going to do all of the dreadful things I warned Eli about. I have continually threatened him and his entire family with punishment, because his sons are blaspheming God, and he (Eli) doesn't stop them. So, I have vowed that the sins of Eli and of his sons shall never be forgiven by sacrifices and offerings".***
   e) The terrible things that the sons of Eli were doing are recounted in the earlier parts of this chapter, so go back after this session and learn from their mistakes.
   f) Now Samuel was afraid to tell Eli what the Lord has said to him. But look at 1 Samuel 1, verses 16 & 17: *But Eli called him. "My son" he said, "What did the Lord say to you? Tell me everything. And may God punish you if you hide anything from me".*
   g) After Samuel had told Eli what God had spoken to Him, we see Eli's reply: *"It is the Lord's will. Let Him do what He thinks is best".*
   h) Now I want you to understand a very important lesson from this passage of scripture:
      a. Eli was the High Priest and each year he was responsible to go into the Holy of Holies and to make the sin offering on behalf of Himself and the nation of Israel.
      b. But Eli was allowing sin to be visible within his own household, and therefore, God could not accept his sacrifices on behalf of the nation of Israel, unless he corrected his own family first.
      c. This was not the first time God had spoken to Eli and warned him to correct his family, and to follow the ways of the Lord.
      d. Eli told his sons to stop sinning, but they ignored his warning, and continued to sin, in the eyes of the Lord, and before the nation of Israel.

e. This behaviour was direct rebellion against their father and against the High Priest of Israel – God's representative for the nation of Israel.
f. God had to make the people see that mercy and compassion comes from God, but at a certain point God's mercy ceases and God's judgement takes over, as an example and a warning to the nation of Israel.
g. God does not tolerate continued sin, especially after He sends you several warnings!

God continues to speak to Samuel throughout the books of Samuel and in Chronicles, to show that God speaks to people, who obey His commandments, and who learn to live to serve Him ~~ above all else!

There are many instances in the New Testament where God speaks to people, and it has a miraculous change in their lives:

7. **God spoke to Zechariah through the Angel Gabriel**
   - To tell him that his wife Elizabeth would give birth to a child, who would be called John the Baptist.
   - He did not believe the news, so he was made dumb, as an example to the Jews, and as a personal punishment, until the baby was born.
8. **God spoke to Mary through the Angel Gabriel**
   - Mary accepted what the Angel told her, even though it meant she would be criticized by the whole village where she lived.
   - Do you realise that Joseph could have had her killed for being with child because she was betrothed to him, and they were not yet married?
   - But an angel told Joseph not to put her away, and gave him the good news about Jesus as well.

9. **God spoke to Saul on the Damascus Road**, and told him that he had been selected by God, to bring the good news of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles around the world.
   - Saul went on three missionary journeys,
   - He was shipwrecked, was bitten by snakes, received 39 lashes of the whip (5 times) spent time in prison (twice) and finally was killed for serving the Lord.
   - We know that Saul's name was changed to Paul and he wrote many of the Epistles of the New Testament, which is preached and taught by pastors and teachers in every country in the world today. This includes the Epistle to the Church in Laodicea, which was included in the Wycliffe Translation into English in 1384. Sadly, the 47 "selected by man theologians" thought they knew better than God, and left is out of the King James Version (first & second editions in 1611)
10. **So, what about today?**
   - The word says that the Lord will reveal Himself to all those who diligently seek His face.
   - Do you realise that you are all called by name and called according to His divine plan and purpose for your life?
   - I ask each and every one of you here today. Do you know what God's plan and purpose is for your life?
     - Does God want you to be a mother and housewife?
     - Does God want you to be the best teacher in school, so that your students will acknowledge that there is something special about you, and ask you questions, which will be an opportunity for you to witness to them about Jesus Christ?
     - Does God want you to work in the business sector? If so, will you be an honest businessman, to witness for God – or will you just try to make money by whatever means you can – which brings no glory and honour to God at all.
     - Does God want you in the ministry, to preach or teach others about Jesus Christ?
     - This is a long and hard road to travel – one with many "worldly hardships" but many "spiritual blessings."
     - Does God want you in music ministry, to sing, to lead worship, or play instruments? This is a ministry, which requires a lot of soul searching, to know and hear accurately the words from God, so you can direct the music, as the

Holy Spirit leads you, in praise & worship services, so that the Holy Spirit can miraculously move on the hearts & minds of members of the congregation.

To be effective, as the father of you family, to be in business, or to be in ministry, all require that you have the ability to know and recognise the voice of God - and when you hear it, understand the message **and obey it – without fear.**

Are you ready to be called by God today?

Let us pray.

CHAPTER 2: HEARING FROM GOD – PART 2

1. In Gen. 1:3 God said: "Let there be light – and there was light" ~ It happened!!!
2. Whenever God speaks it: It Happens!!!
   a. The beginning of everything starts with hearing!!
   b. If you don't hear properly – you cannot do properly!!!
   c. Let us do a test:
      i. Read this out (privately) to the first person in the front row.
      ii. Tell them to speak it to the next person (privately) and continue this until everybody in the room has been told the message.
      iii. "God loves a cheerful giver. How will you give today?"
      iv. The last person is to come back out the front and tell everybody what the message is. You will be surprised when you hear what the last person thought she heard.
3. All of God's creation in the universe were created to know the "Voice of God" and to obey it!!!
   a. That is why the sun comes up each day, (on time).
   b. The moon shines by night (and never takes a holiday).
   c. The planets and the stars remain in the sky, in the exact position, and in the exact orbits, they were placed in by God at creation. (They never have sick days, or long service leave).
   d. The seasons come in their turn each year – all in accordance to God's word, as proclaimed in the book of Genesis.
   e. All know and recognise the voice of God.
4. When we hear from God there is a "life changing experience within us".
   a. Your spirit is attuned to the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit and it reacts when it hears the voice of God Almighty, or one of His messengers.
5. When you hear from God your life changes – it cannot remain static!!!
6. Christianity is Alive!!! – Continually growing & continually revealing God's Word to us.
7. The Holy Spirit is waiting to respond to what we hear from God.
8. The Holy Spirit wants to empower what you have heard from God, to see it come to fruition, to bring glory to God the Father.
9. When <u>things are not going well in your life</u> – this is when Satan speaks to you.
   a. Be aware of the deceiver. Always test the voices you hear, to make sure that they are true and that they line up with the Word of God.
   b. Recognise that his voice (Satan's voice) is not the voice of God.
   c. Recognise that Satan is always demanding!!
   d. What he wants – he wants now!!!
   e. What he wants - does not glorify God!!!
10. In Gen. 12:1 God tells Abram to leave his family, his home, and his country, and go to a place that the Lord would show him.
    a. What did Abram have to do?
       i. He had to "hear" the voice of God;
       ii. He had to "<u>recognise" that it was the voice</u> of God – not the voice of the deceiver
       iii. He had to "<u>pack" up his belongings and move</u>.
       iv. It required a "positive" response.
       v. It required "action" from Abram to the voice of God.
       vi. He could not remain static ~ there had to be a change!!!
       vii. As a result of recognising, and acting on God's voice, there was a positive change in his life, and God blessed him for his obedience.

11. When you hear God's voice and act on it, then you:
    a. Get out of your present situation, and into a place where God wants you to be.
    b. This is a place where you can grow and mature in Him.
12. You cannot prosper in second choices; because you must be following God's first choice, for your life to prosper.
    a. If you are following God's second choice for your life, you are walking in God's *permissive will* – not His *submissive will.*
13. There are 3 wills which God identifies in the scriptures.
    a. Submissive will,
    b. Permissive will, and
    c. Rebellious will.
    d. Let us look at the effects of each on us, and on those around us. Notice that these three different types of will, have an effect on you, but also have an effect on those, who are around you.

14. Submissive will;
    a. The perfect will of God. When you are walking in this will, there is perfect peace in your life, and you will be blessed and those around you will be blessed as well.

15. Permissive will;
    a. When you are in the "permissive will of God", those around you will be blessed, but you will not feel peace within your own heart.
    b. You will not receive blessings yourself.
    c. In fact, you find yourself going backwards in God, and suffer many trials and tribulations, as warnings to look at yourself, where you are, what you are doing, and where you are going.

16. Rebellious will;
    a. When you are rebelling against God, *you are refusing to recognise his authority over your life*.
    b. <u>You have chosen another god to worship.</u>
    c. This could be because you are listening to *"your own reasoning"* instead of *listening to God's words*.
    d. Remember the scripture tells us that God's ways are higher than our ways; and that we cannot completely understand God's ways unless, we put our complete trust in Him.
    e. When we are in rebellion against God's word, we don't put any trust in His word and therefore, God leaves us to suffer the consequences of our actions.
    f. For every decision we make, <u>there will always be consequences!</u>
17. Faith is always involved when we hear from God
    a. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.
18. All of God's children are candidates to hear and receive from God. Matthew 7:7 says: *"Ask and it shall be given unto you; seek and you shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you"*
19. What we must do;
    a. Keep on asking,
    b. Keep on seeking
    c. Keep on knocking.
20. Everyone who continues to ask, seek or knock will receive from God. This is God's promise to all of us.
    a. There are no "maybes" in this scripture. This is a direct promise from God Almighty.
21. Matthew 7:24: *"Therefore whosoever hears these sayings of mine <u>and does them,</u> I will liken him to a wise man who built house on a rock."*
22. Whenever you see the word "Therefore", in the scriptures, go back and read the previous verses, to see why this word is "there for". Go back and see what God said in the previous verses, because if you hear them and do them there will be a reward for you.
23. So, the secret is to say: **"Yes to God!"**
    a. Say "Yes" you want to hear from God.
    b. Say "Yes" you will act on what you hear from God.
    c. Say "Yes" you will do what God wants you to do.

d. Say "Yes" you will be what God wants you to be.

24. Believe that you can do miracles for God, because you have the same power living within you that raised up Jesus Christ from the dead.
25. Remember that Jesus said: "Greater things shall you do because I go to the Father".

All this is possible, if we have attuned our spiritual ears to hear and receive, the voice of God into our lives, and thence into our hearts. Because wherever our hearts are, there shall our treasures shall be also.

Remember, that when we hear something from God, He is never too busy for us to ask Him to clarify it, so we truly understand what it is He wants us to do.

If you study the life of Gideon, you will find that he did just that. In fact he was so surprised that God wanted him to do something, he asked God for 3 different miracles to prove that it was in fact God who was speaking to him.

However, when God did in fact perform the miracles that he asked for, Gideon then went and obeyed God without question, even though what God was asking him to do seemed impossible to our own wisdom and understanding. Yet because of his obedience, God was able to defeat 300,000 troops with only 300 men.

CHAPTER 3: HEARING FROM GOD – PART 3

In the Bible, as translated from the original Aramaic texts, it says in John 10:1: *Truly, truly I say unto you, He who does not enter by the door into the sheepfold, but climbs up from another place, is a thief and a bandit. But he, who enters by the door, is the shepherd of the sheep. To him, the doorkeeper opens the door, and the sheep hear his voice and he calls his own sheep by their names and brings them out. And when he has brought out his sheep he goes before them; and his own sheep follow him, because they "recognise his voice".*

Jesus used this simple story to explain how sheep recognise the voice of their masters. The people to whom he was explaining this story all knew that at night time it was quite a common practise in Israel for a group of shepherds to herd their flocks together, in one protected area, so that the combined number of shepherds would be able to protect the sheep from all attackers, the people who wanted to steal the sheep, and animals who wanted to kill them for food.

Jesus also went on to explain that in the morning, the person on guard was responsible for recognising the shepherds and only letting them in to speak to the sheep and to call them out by name.

My wife Rani and I have seen this happen with a shepherd in Oman. He called out to the sheep and the sheep, who were quite far away, raised their heads when they heard his voice, and turned to the direction of his voice, to get a clearer sound. Once they recognised the voice of their shepherd, they immediately ran into his presence.

Omani Shepherd hitting the tree to bring down leaves as food for His sheep.

This is the physical picture that Jesus used to explain a deeper, more spiritual meaning of the parable. We are the sheep, and Jesus is the shepherd. We are collectively put into the place of protection, which is the world that we live in. Bandits and thieves try to enter and steal away treasures into the darkness. We know that Satan is the prince of darkness and that the thieves and bandits he uses to deceive us are clearly identified in scripture.

When Jesus (our shepherd) approaches the sheepfold, the doorkeeper (which is the Holy Spirit) opens the door and allows him to enter.

When Jesus speaks, His true sheep recognise His voice and follow him, when He calls their names. Because Jesus knows every one of His sheep by name.

When Jesus commences a journey, His sheep follow Him; they are obedient to His voice and to His instructions.

Now notice what it says in verse 5: ***The sheep do not follow a stranger, but they run away from him, because they do not know the voice of the stranger.***

Now there are three voices which we hear in this world we live in:

1. **The voice of God**
2. **The Voice of reason**
3. **The voice of Satan.**

Let us look at number 3 first: The voice of Satan.

Satan's voice, will use your mind, and try to lead you away from the voice of God.

- He will deposit doubt and fear in your mind.
- He will cause confusion,
- He will tempt you,
- He will make promises which are untrue, when matched up against God's word.
- He will promise wicked things,
- Satan's voice is demanding.
- Satan's voice NEVER brings glory to God.

To be strong enough to overcome Satan's power in your life, requires that you continually renew your mind, as recounted in Romans chapter 12.

Remember God's voice is God's Word (John 1:1). Then later God's word became flesh and dwelt amongst us ~ (John 1:14).

When you read God's word your mind becomes tuned to the voice and mind of God, just like tuning a radio to a station. The finer the tuning, the clearer the signal becomes.

What you are doing by fine tuning the station is in fact tuning out all the other stations, so that only one is heard.

Reading God's word renews your mind and it affects each and every part of your body.

Learn to protect and guard your heart. When God speaks to you there is always peace in your heart.

When there is peace, there is confirmation of God's Word, God's plan, God's purpose & God's timing in your life.

When Satan speaks: it is a demanding voice.

God never demands anything from us. He is gentle, never forceful, never demanding, but patient and kind.

In Judges Chapter 14, we see that Samson is God's chosen man for that time period. He was chosen to bring the nation of Israel to repentance.

Do you realise that Angel Gabriel visit "the wife of Manoah" 3 times before he was born, to instruct her not to eat certain foods, and not drink any wine because God had chosen son to be a mighty man of God?

But Samson did not listen to God's voice. He was impatient and he lusted after the flesh.

He saw a beautiful woman and went and told his father and mother to "get her for me - NOW"!!! Proverbs 29:20: Learn not to be hasty. Love is patient. Love is kind.

- When you are hasty you become impatient.
- When you become impatient, you step out of the realm of patience and become irritated.
- When you are irritated, you step out of peace into peacelessness – a place of no peace.
- God will not dwell in a place of peacelessness.

The Voice of Reason:

- God wants to be involved in all-of your decision-making processes.
- Isaiah 55:8-9 says: *My thoughts are not like your thoughts, neither are my ways like your ways, says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts higher than your thoughts.*

Therefore, we have to learn to think like God thinks, and to think "at God's level of understanding".

The Voice of God:

- Always lines up with the Word of God.

- Will always ask you to do things which will bless others, and bring glory and honour to God.
- God's voice will bring peace into your heart.
- Acting upon God's voice may not be easy, but will always result in a "spiritual blessing", both to the hearer, and to the doer, and to those around them.

So today I have to ask you these questions:

1. Has God spoken to you?
2. Did you recognise His voice?
3. Did you obey His voice?
4. If not, why not?

Do you realise that when we hear God's voice and do not respond to it, we are being very selfish, because we are withholding God's blessing from somebody else?

The only way to act after that is to ask God for forgiveness and like Jonah go back and do what God asked you to do in the first place.

This is the only way to move from the permissive will of God back into His submissive will, where He can bless you and make you grow in Him.

CHAPTER 4: HEARING FROM GOD – PART 4

In the original Aramaic texts, in the book of Revelation, chapter 2, verse 7 it says: ***"He who has ears, let him hear, what the Spirit says to the churches".***

In other translations it says: ***"To him who is able to hear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches".***

- The fact that you have an ear, does not literally mean that you can hear from God.
  - There are many people, who have an ear, but their hearing is impaired – they are "hard of hearing" – or "even deaf". They have to have assistance equipment to allow them to hear - like hearing aids.
  - There are other people who cannot hear from God because they have "other noises" turned up so loud, that the voice of God is drowned out.
- We all know that there are thousands of signals going through the airwaves every minute, but we cannot hear them unless we have an instrument which can tune into these signals, separate out the unwanted signals, and only have one signal left for you to listen to.
- We do this when we tune in a transistor radio, or a TV set.
  - As we tune in the wanted signal it becomes clearer, because as we tune in the wanted signal, we are in fact tuning out all other unwanted signals.
  - This enables us to select and hear only one signal, from all those which are available for us to hear.
- In the spiritual realm the same principal applies:
  - Before we can hear from God, we must have an instrument operating in our lives which will allow us to tune into the signal from God, and at the same time, tune out all the unwanted signals, coming from Satan and other unwanted sources.
  - To be able to hear from God, **<u>we must become enabled</u>**. This means that the Holy Spirit must be operating in our lives.
  - When we hear from God, **<u>we must not only hear</u>**, but **<u>we must act upon what we hear from His word</u>**. We must obey!
    - Remember the scripture tells you to be <u>doers of the word</u>, not just <u>hearers of the Word only</u>.
- If the Holy Spirit is not operating in your life, you may occasionally hear from God, but the signal will be all scrambled up, and will include other information, from other sources, which makes it almost impossible to understand or act upon it.
- **The Voice of Satan/Voice of Reasoning.** Neither of these voices produce faith, truth or trust in God.

TEST 1: This is one of the most important tests you must undertake, to ensure what you are hearing is indeed God's voice.

- **When you hear God's voice it must:**
  - Produce faith in your heart;

    - Its truth must line up with the truth in God's word
    - It must draw you nearer to God, and your trust in Him should increase.
- God's Voice is God's Word.
- God's thinking is higher than our thinking
    - Isaiah 55:8-9 says: *My thoughts are not like your thoughts, neither are my ways like your ways, says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts higher than your thoughts.*
- God wants us to learn how to think, like He thinks – so that we can be blessed and receive power from Him
- Whenever God speaks it brings forth Life!

TEST 2: This is the second important test you must undertake.
- **"When God speak it brings forth life."**
- If what you heard does not bring forth life, **<u>then it is not from God.</u>**
- We were all designed to hear from God.
    - In Exodus 3:3 Moses sees the burning bush and He turns aside to see this miracle.
        - While he is there, he hears the voice of God speaking to him.
        - Moses sees the miracle
        - Moses turns aside to take a closer look – to bring him closer to the miracle - to get a clearer view.
        - Moses hears the voice of God telling him to take off his shoes, for the place on which he stands is holy ground.
    - Moses acts upon what he hears that day, and opens a channel which will allow him to hear and recognise the voice of God for the next 40 years.
- We must all be like Moses, and tune in continually, to receive and recognise the voice of God speaking too us.
- God's Voice is God's Word.
    - In John 1:1-6 we see that in the beginning was the word, and the word was God, and the word was with God.
    - In John 1: 14 it says that the Words became flesh, and dwelt among us.
    - The word took upon itself human form and human flesh.
    - At the cross, the human flesh was discarded, with all the inherited sin, and once again the spirit part of God went to be with the Father in heaven, with a new spiritual body.
    - After the ascension into heaven, God gave us the Holy Spirit, so that He could become plugged into us.

TEST 3: Things Which Limits Us Hearing from God

1. **Learn not to do anything BEFORE we first hear from God**.
    - Otherwise, we are working from our reasoning, working in our own flesh ~ not from God's plan or purpose.
    - In John 16:13 it says: *"But when the Spirit shall come, He will lead you into **<u>ALL TRUTH</u>**."*
        - This does not mean that you will understand the whole bible instantly – No!
        - But it does mean that the Holy Spirit will reveal to you all truth about the particular situation you are in, or the task you have been asked to do from God, at that point in time.
        - When the Holy Spirit fell upon Saul, after Ananias laid hands upon him in Damascus, and the scales fell off his eyes, and he could see again, he did not know that he would go to many countries to preach the gospel, nor that he would be persecuted by the Jews and by the Romans, nor that he would be threatened with death, put into prison, and eventually be killed as a martyr.
        - But the Holy Spirit did reveal to him, a new understanding of the scriptures in the next 4 years, while he was in the Arabian Desert, before he went back to Tarsus.
        - The Holy Spirit did reveal to him who Jesus really was, how it was revealed to him from the Old Testament scriptures, and what His purpose was in coming to earth and dying on the cross for our sins.

        - It was this new revelation which put a burning desire in the heart of Saul to become a preacher for Jesus, which resulted in him being given a new name: Apostle Paul.
- The Holy Spirit is the transmitter of God's Holy Word to us.
    - After the Holy Spirit came to earth there were no more riddles or parables.
    - We need to pray to receive God's secrets from heaven.
    - The Holy Spirit speaks to us in plain language for all of us to understand.
    - John 16:23-24 says: *In that day you will not ask of me anything. Truly, truly I say unto you, that whatever you ask my Father in My name, He will give you. Up until now you have asked for nothing in my name; ask and you will receive, so that your joy maybe full.*
    - All the promises from God are guaranteed in His word.

2. Dullness of your Spirit will mean a dullness towards God's Spirit in your life.

- Addictions can either sharpen or dull your spirit.
    - If you are addicted to worship and praise, it will sharpen your spirit towards God.
    - If you are addicted to reading the word of God, it will sharpen your spirit towards God.
    - (Read Ps 119:63), *I am a friend of all them that worship thee, and of them that keep thy commandments.*
- **People who are sharp for God, are a blessing to you.**
- However, wrong relationships, will restrict your sharpness to God.
- Carnal relationships will dull your spirits.
    - God is against all those who do not worship Him, and do not keep His commandments.

3. Distractions will restrict you hearing from God – His voice will get softer & softer.

- Mark 4:19 says: *"And the thoughts of this world and the deceptions of wealth and the lusts of other things enter in and choke off the word and bear no fruit".*

4. Looseness will restrict our relationship with God

- Inability to flow with God
- Hebrews 4:11-13 says: *Let us strive therefore to enter into that rest [that peace], lest any man fall like those who were disobedient. For the word of God is living and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the point of division between soul and spirit, and between the joints and marrow and bones, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight; but all things are naked and open before the eyes of Him to whom we are to answer.*

5. God's word is alive

- God's word is energised.

6. The Ways God Speaks to you

- John 16:11: [The Word of God, Righteousness, Miracles, Signs & Wonders, The Holy Spirit, Circumstances, Visions, Dreams]
- All of these are ways that God can speak to you
- Learn to become a revealer for Christ.
    - In Acts chapter 16, it gives the account of Paul arriving in the cities of Lystra and Derbe, and meeting up with Timothy, who then accompanied Paul on his missionary journey to other cities in the area.
    - As a result of their ministry, the churches were established in the faith, and their numbers increased daily.
    - In Acts 16 verse 6 it says: *Then they travelled through the countries of Phrygia and Galatia,* ***<u>and the Holy Spirit forbade them to speak the word of God in Asian Minor.</u>***
    - This is important to note: **<u>The Holy Spirit spoke to Paul and forbade him for speaking the word in Asia Minor.</u>**
    - Why do you think that was? The scripture does not tell us – but it was not part of God's plan to allow them to preach in this area at this time.
    - **Paul had to make a choice:**

a) He could have ignored the warning of the Holy Spirit and suffered the consequences of his disobedience, or
b) He could hear, recognise and act upon the instructions of the Holy Spirit, to continue to be in the will of God, and to continue to receive blessing from Him.

- **In Acts 16: 7 we see a continuation of this warning:** *And when they came to the country of Mysia, they wanted to go from there to Bithynia; but, the spirit of Jesus permitted them not. And when they left Mysia, they came to the country of Troas.*
- *And in a vision of the night, there appeared to Paul a man resembling a Macedonian, standing and begging him saying: "Come over to Macedonia and help us". And after Paul had seen this vision, we were desirous to leave for Macedonia at once….*

If you want to hear from God then tell Him!!!

- In Psalm 84:12, we see that David yearns for God. He yearns with a hunger to hear from God.
- We have to be that hungry to hear from God – just like David and just like Paul.

CHAPTER 5: IS HEAVEN A REAL PLACE?

Introduction

Many Christians have heard about Heaven, but if they were asked to describe this place, they would find it difficult, and in many cases impossible to describe.

Many believe Heaven to be a mythical place, with angels floating around on clouds, playing harps and continually singing praises to God Almighty.

When asked what we "Christians" will be doing in Heaven, many Christians find it difficult to describe our role, or our actions in Heaven.

However, if we carefully study the scriptures, and we truly believe the Word of God, we will find that God made us to desire things, and that is exactly what He has done about Heaven.

If we follow Jesus Christ, we are promised a resurrected life, in a resurrected body, with the resurrected Jesus Christ, here on a resurrected earth (New Earth). These desires correspond exactly to God's plan and purpose for our lives.

There have been many sermons talking about the promises of the rapture, about meeting Christ in the sky and then going to the existing heaven. But where is it, what is it, what will we do when we get there, and how long will we stay there?

These are questions that all Christians must know and understand, because you will be in heaven for eternity, so it is important to completely understand our role in the eternal mind of God and His eternal plans and purposes for us.

Revelations chapters 21-22 give a clear explanation about heaven, but very few pastors preach on these chapters from the pulpit. Let us look at these two chapters carefully.

Revelations Chapter 21[1]

Verse 1: *And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.*

When does this occur? The passing away of the present heaven (the first heaven), and the present earth (the first earth), occurs at the conclusion of the Great White Throne Judgement.

Jesus prophesied that this would happen, as recorded in Matthew 24:35 *"Heaven and earth shall pass away".* The timing and method of this event is clearly explained by Apostle Peter, in 2 Peter 3, verses 7, 10-13.

"The heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgement and perdition of ungodly men. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that

[1] Jack Van Impe Prophecy Bible

are therein shall be burned up. Seeing that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in all holy conversation and godliness. Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? NEVERTHELESS we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

In this new world referred to by Apostle Peter, the sea is eliminated, possibly because it has connotations of spiritual wickedness. [Isaiah 57:20] *The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.* Another reason maybe that oceanic vegetation is no longer necessary on this "new earth".

On the New Earth, the curse of sin is lifted, so mankind will no longer have to "toil and strive" to eke out a living for themselves and their families.

Verse 2: *And I, (Apostle) John saw the holy city, the New Jerusalem, coming down from God, out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.*

There are two Jerusalem's mentioned in scripture. [See Galatians 4:25-26 and Hebrews 12:22.]

- One of these references is an earthly place, the home of the believers during the millennium period. This is the place where Christ will reign with the believers for 1,000 years. This is also a place where the 144,000 Jews will evangelise those who refused to believe the Christ as the Messiah, and to give them one last chance. to make a commitment for Jesus. However, they will enter into a heavenly rest, but unfortunately, they will not be part of the Bride of Christ.
- The 144,000 will be the temple servants on the New Earth and those converted after the rapture will be the servants of Jesus and the Bride on the New Earth.
- The other is a heavenly place – as the New Jerusalem, (or sometimes referred to as the celestial city.) This city hovers over the earth during the 1,000 (millennium) year reign of Christ upon the earth, and then comes down to earth, and becomes situated eternally upon the earth at the end of the 1,000-year period. (Rev. 21:9 to 22:15 and then Rev. 21:1-8) The chronology is reversed here.

The New Jerusalem, is undoubtedly the one that Jesus Christ has been preparing for us for 2,000 years, for the Saviour said in John 14:2: *"I go to prepare a place for you".* This magnificent masterpiece, descending to earth, reminds us of the beauty of the bride on her wedding day.

When the celestial city returns to earth, God will again dwell amongst His creation, as it was in the Garden of Eden (before sin). Things will be as they were then; with no death, no sin, no sickness, and we once again be permitted to eat from the tree of life.

Verse 3: And I heard a great voice out of Heaven saying: behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He dwells with them, and they be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God."

From "the time of the fall in the Garden of Eden" until now, God's Tabernacle has been located in the present heaven. Now we discover a change of address for God. The Almighty descends to earth, with His heavenly entourage, settling in the New Jerusalem, to begin global operations from this satellite city.

The redeemed people of God (those whose names are still listed in the Lamb's Book of Life) in their glorified bodies, live in the New Jerusalem. Those with bodies of flesh (those who were born and saved during the millennium period), enter the eternal state with their natural bodies. They live on earth, in and under the light of the Holy City (See chapter 21, verse 24).

The true beauty of this whole scene is that God dwells in the midst of His people, for the voice cries: ***Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God".***

Another exciting fact is that believers, with their glorified bodies will be able to do things which they cannot do today. They will be able to travel at the speed of light, yes, even as fast as their thoughts. For believers the statement out of Star Trek: "Beam me up Scottie" will in fact become a reality. Thus, they will be able to travel to and from their city on earth

to their spiritual city in space – the New Jerusalem in a moment (in a twinkling of an eye) of time.

Verse 4: "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away".

If nothing else excites you about being in heaven, and then later upon the new earth, then this single verse should have you rejoicing.

- No more tears
- No more sorrow
- No more crying
- No more pain
- No more sickness
- For all the former things are passed away.

This is mentioned in verse 2 and is only true after the millennium, then Christ's kingdom recommissioned and eternally established on earth. No wonder the redeemed of the Lamb can cry out triumphantly: *Oh death, where is thy sting? Oh grave, where is thy victory?* (1. Corinthians 15:55)

Never again will a funeral procession take place upon the earth, for death – the last enemy, will have already been destroyed (see 1. Corinthians 15:26). In addition, everything associated with death will be eliminated, from time and eternity. Glory!

- No more disease
- No more heart attacks
- No more automobile accidents
- No more wars, or rumours of wars

Jesus said; "*It is finished"*! And Jesus says what he means and means what He says. It is finished", is truly the national anthem of eternity. Although these truths in themselves are wonderful revelations, the greatest fact is that the Lord's people see His face (See Rev. 22:4). In addition, sin has ceased. There no longer is any sin in the world, because Satan is eternally incarcerated in Gehenna, referred to elsewhere in scripture as the Lake of Fire. (See Rev. 20:10). The Old has passed away – all becomes new. A new day in a New Heaven, suspended above the New Earth.

Verse 5: "He that sat upon the throne said: Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me; Write: for these words are true and faithful".

So, in conclusion, are you ready to meet your maker?

Are you sure that when you meet Him, that He will welcome you with open arms and say; "Well done my good and faithful servant"?

Selah! Stop, Pause, and think about that!

CHAPTER 6: HEBREWS CHAPTER 6, VERSES 1-3

Apostle Paul, writing to the Hebrew Christians[2], identifies in these first three verses of Hebrews chapter 6, what he calls the ***"kindergarten classes"*** of Christianity.

This chapter starts with the word: "Therefore", so we must go back to the previous chapter to find out why that word is there-for!

1. The Doctrines of Jesus Christ [Notice there is more than one doctrine.] What are they?
2. Foundations of repentance from dead works [Notice that there is more than one foundation doctrine for repentance.] What are they?
3. Faith towards God. What is it? How do you use it?
4. The Doctrine of Baptism(s) (plural) – [not one baptism, but more than one baptism]. What are the "other baptisms" that are being referred to?

[2] As identified in the Peshitta Bible, (the original Syriac texts)

5. The Doctrine of "the laying-on of hands". [We must ask "when", "why", "who can" & "how"?]
6. The resurrection of the dead. When will this occur?
7. Eternal Judgement.
   How does this apply to "born again" Christians?
   How does this apply to "believers"?
   How does this apply to "unbelievers"?

Here Paul lists the seven fundamental doctrines of a **"Kindergarten Christian"**, that is, a **"baby in Christ."**

Unfortunately, today, if you asked some pastors to prepare a sermon on each of these topics, they would be struggling, let alone members of their congregations!!!!

A wise general once said these words: "An army can never go farther than its leader.

THE SAME PRINCIPLE APPLIES TO CHURCH CONGREGATIONS IN THE WORLD TODAY!

So, looking back at the seven kindergarten subjects, can you prepare a sermon on each of these topics?

Or, are you still a baby Christian? Are you still attending kindergarten classes, or have your graduated to a higher class?

Only you and God can answer these questions, which have eternal repercussions and consequences, for you and your eternal soul.

CHAPTER 7: JOHN CHAPTER 4

Jesus comes to the well and demands the "woman at the well" to give Him water. She replies with a question: *"How is it that thou, being a Jew, asks drink from me, which am a woman of Samaria? For the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans".*

Other translations say that the Jews hate the Samaritans (and the Samaritans hate the Jews), but why is this? We need to go back into history, to fully understand why, even today, there is so much hatred between the Jews and the Palestinians (the Samaritans).

In the times of King David and King Solomon, it was a time of peace, and all of the 12 tribes of Israel were located in the Promised Land, within the boundaries, as defined by God Almighty to Joshua.

However, King Solomon did evil in the sight of God and God sent a prophet to tell Him that because of his evil, the kingdom was going to be torn apart, but because of God's love for Solomon's father (King David) God said He would separate the kingdom after King Solomon's death. This happened in the reign of King Solomon's son.

A civil war broke out, and 10 tribes broke away from Israel, because they refused to follow the unwise tax decisions of Solomon's son and set up their capital in Samaria. So now we have two parts of Israel;

I Kings 11:30-32,35	Judah & Levites remain in Jerusalem and remained faithful to God's word. This group is referred to in the scriptures as **"Judah"** ~~~ those who remained in Jerusalem.	10 tribes go to Samaria, and follow after "other gods". These are referred to in scripture as **"Israel"**, in fact **"rebellious Israel"**.

Further along in time we come to 2 Kings chapter 15. In the 27th year of the reign of Jeroboam, king of "rebellious Israel", Azariah, the son of Amaziah took the throne in Judah, to reign over Jerusalem. He was only 16 years of age and he ruled for 52 years. And he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, EXCEPT he did not cut down the high places where people went to worship "other gods' inside Jerusalem.

Meanwhile in Rebellious Israel (Samaria) they were doing deals with the King of Assyria who had invaded their country. They agreed to join forces with the King of Assyria and together, go and attack the King of Judah and retake Jerusalem.

They came and killed the men, took the women prisoners and ripped open all of the pregnant women and killed all of the unborn Jewish children.

"If we don't learn from history, then history is doomed to repeat itself!"

Because of their disobedience, Jerusalem was captured (again) and the Jews were taken off to Babylon for 70 years, for punishment for their disobedience, for turning away from God Almighty.

Later, in the time of the Greeks Empire, Jerusalem was overrun and came under the rule of Greeks, who were worshipping "other gods".

In the time of the Roman Empire, Jerusalem was again conquered and put under the rule of a nation which worshipped "other gods", but this time the Jews were permitted to continue to follow their religion and worship God Almighty.

In AD 70, the Romans destroyed the Temple in Jerusalem, just as Jesus prophesied would happen.

For several hundred years, (from AD 100 onwards) there was "relative peace" in the region, and Israel continued to worship the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and were still waiting for their Messiah to come.

Then in the 1400's the Ottoman Empire invaded Jerusalem and once again Israel was under the rule of an empire which worshipped "other gods" and built the Al Aksa Mosque and the Dome Mosque on the temple mount, and the hatred between these two nations has continued, ever since.

In 1917, the Australian Light Horse captured Beersheba and this was the major battle which allowed the Australians to march into Jerusalem and free it from the domination of the Islamic empire.

As a result, the British government introduced the Balfour Declaration (100 years ago), and they declared that a new nation would be established, as part of the "spoils of war".

The new nation was to be called "Palestine". This was an unfortunate choice of names, and there has been fighting there ever since; between are those who claim that Palestine also includes Jerusalem, and those who say Jerusalem belongs to the Jews, since King David captured Salem (now called Jerusalem), more than 2500 years ago.

So, we look to this region today and what do we see? Babylonians (Iraq, Iran and Jordan), are still attacking Israel and all those who believe and worship the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, both Christians and Jews.

ISIS is their weapon of choice, and what do we see happening? People worshipping "other gods" are killing the followers of God Almighty, beheading the men, and ripping open the pregnant women, exactly like took place over 2500 years before.

"If we don't learn from history, then history is doomed to repeat itself!"

Jesus explained a new revelation of the scriptures in the Beatitudes, when He said: ***"It has been said of old, that you love your neighbour, but hate your enemy, but I tell you a "better way", that you love your enemies also".***

Jesus "had to go to Samaria" to implement this teaching **"by example"**, but even though the Samaritans accepted Jesus as the Messiah, and many became Christians, the hate between the descendants of the 10 rebellious tribes (Israel) and the tribe of Judah and the Levites still remains. **So, what can we learn from this?**

No matter where these 10 rebellious tribes travel to in the world, they take their hatred with them, and they try to impose their hatred and their religion of hate, upon each and every nation they invade.

Yes, it is an invasion, as Satan uses them to advance his kingdom on earth, and to take away God' glory, which is peace, because Jesus IS the GOD of Peace.

That is why there is so much fighting over the "ownership" of Jerusalem, because it is by name the city of Peace, as "Salem" means peace.

The King of Salem, who came out to give a "peace offering" to Abraham, when He returned with Lot and the spoils captured in the battle is referred to as the King of Peace, but also as the High Priest of the Order of Melchizedek.

Jesus is also referred to as the "Prince of Peace", and a High Priest, of the Order of Melchizedek. He is the "Prince of Peace" because His Father is the "King of Peace".

Now, let us look at recent happenings, according to prophetic words of the scriptures.

In 2015, for the first time since AD 70, the Passover was celebrated in Israel, with the killing of the sacrificial lambs (outside the city) and the sprinkling of the blood on the Temple Mount.

In 2016, Israel elected its first High Priest, since AD 70, to prepare the way for the re-establishment of Temple worship on the Temple Mount.

In 2016, The High Priest was present when the Passover was celebrated, fulfilling the prophecies that these things would come to pass, "in the last days", before the return of Jesus Christ.

In 2016, the Israeli parliament passed legislation to recognise that "Messianic Jews", (those who recognise that Jesus IS the Messiah), have the same legal rights in Israel as Orthodox Jews.

In 2017, we celebrate two major events which effect this region, AND the rest of the world.

The Balfour declaration was signed 100 years ago, which separated "Palestine" from the hands of the Islamic Empire, and the Battle of Beersheba is celebrated on 31st October this year, which freed Jerusalem from the influence of the Islamic rulers of "Palestine".

As Israel moves towards celebrating 5777, the "year of Jubilee" there is another move in Israel to take back the Temple Mount, so it can be prepared for the rebuilding of the Third Temple, and many Jews from all over the world are pouring in donations for its reconstruction. The design for the temple has already been completed.

It is time to revisit the Book of Revelations, (and tick off what has already taken place in the books of Daniel and Ezekiel) and get ready for the next steps towards tribulation.

Jesus is coming back!!! But before He does come back there will be major persecution of all peoples who follow Jesus Christ.

In 2018, the newly appointed High Priest challenged the President of Iraq to re-build the Third Temple, just as his forefathers had done many centuries ago.

In December 2018, the Pope (representing the Christian Churches) signed a COVENANT with the Imam of the Sunni Sect of Islam, so they will no longer fight each other.

This COVENANT was signed in the presence of more than 700 religious' leaders in the United Arab Emirates.

This is the first major step towards a "One WORLD religion". Are you ready for what is to come next?

In the Book of Ezekiel chapters 35 & 36, God Almighty makes it pretty clear that He is not too happy with what the People of Edom have been doing to the Nation of Israel.

Again, a message from the Lord, He said: *Son of dust, face toward Mount Seir and prophecy against the people saying: "The Lord God says: I am against you and I will smash you with my fist and utterly destroy you. Because you hate my people Israel, I will demolish your cities and make you desolate, and then you shall know that I AM the Lord. You butchered my people when they were helpless, when I had punished them for all their sins. As I live, the Lord God says, since you enjoy blood so much, I will give you a blood bath ˜ your turn has come! I will utterly wipe out the people of Mount Seir, killing off those who try to escape and all those who return. I will fill your mountains with your dead ˜ your hills, your valleys, and your rivers will be filled with those that the sword has killed. Never again will you revive. You will be abandoned forever; your cities will never be rebuilt. Then you will know that I AM the Lord. For you said, 'Both Israel and Judah shall be mine. We will take possession of them. What do we care that God is there!"*

Therefore, as I live, the Lord God says, I will pay back your angry deeds with mine ~ I will punish you for all of your acts of envy and of hate. And I will honour my name in Israel by what I do to you. And you shall know that I have heard each evil word you spoke against the Lord saying, His people are helpless; they are food for us to eat. Saying that you boasted great words against the Lord. And I have heard them all.

The whole world will rejoice when I make you desolate. You rejoiced at Israel's fearful fate. Now I will rejoice at yours! You will be wiped out, O people of Mount Seir and all who live in Edom! And then you will know that I AM the Lord!

Are you ready? Are you ready? Are your ready for the coming of the Lord, Are you ready, are you ready, He is coming with His power and His sword.

For the Lord is merciful and righteous, For the Lord is perfect and true,

For the Lord is seeking out His people, Especially, his people, just like you. So are you ready? Are you ready?

CHAPTER 8: JOHN CHAPTER 5

Firstly, we must remember, that at the time that Apostle John was writing this gospel, (in fact at the time all of the writings in scripture, both Old and New Testaments) there were no chapter headings, nor verse numbering, as these were first added by Robert Estienne in 1551, and sometimes the break in the chapter headings, should (in my opinion) have been left out, because it is a continuation of the story recounted in the previous chapter, or chapters.

This chapter starts with the words; "Afterwards", so one must go back and find out "after what"?

After Jesus had visited the woman at the well, and then ***after*** Jesus had spent 3 days with the villagers in Samaria, and then ***after*** Jesus had performed 2 miracles in John chapter 4, then He returns to Jerusalem to attend a Jewish festival.

We know from chapter 6 that the Jewish Festival that He was going to attend was the Passover Feast, and Jesus, who *"did not come to abolish the Law, but to fulfil the Law"*, would have attended at least 33 of these festivals, in his lifetime, but only one is recorded in detail in the scriptures.

The reason for this? Because it was to be **"THE LAST PASSOVER"** and the **BEGINNING OF THE NEW COVENANT**, proclaimed in Jeremiah 31:31 and activated when Jesus rose from the dead, proclaiming to all of Heaven and Earth, and to all principalities and powers, that He had conquered sin and death, and had made a public spectacle of Lucifer [Satan].

In the first 5 verses we have some background details about the sick being healed in the Pool of Bethesda, near the Sheep Gate in Jerusalem.

One of the sick men lying there got Jesus' attention. He had been lying there for 38 years and was frail and nobody was there to help him into the pool to get healed.

Jesus approaches this man and asks him "Do you want to get well"? Notice that Jesus did NOT say "do you want me to help you to be put into the pool"? Jesus asks the man a "faith question", but the man answers with a "worldly response".

"I can't because someone always gets to the pool before I can get there". This man has faith and He believes that if he could get into the pool he would be healed.

Jesus can see this faith and so He tells him to "Stand up! Roll up your sleeping mat, and go home"! Instantly the man was healed! He rolled up his mat and began walking. A mighty miracle was performed, for all the people there to see and to rejoice.

The scripture recounts that "it was on the Sabbath Day when this miracle was done". So the Jewish leaders got upset. They were saying in effect to Jesus; "You can do miracles any other day of the week ~ **but you can't do miracles on the Sabbath"!**

Have you ever been in a church like that? Where they are more concerned with **"the rules,"** than the fact that a person who has been sick for 38 years, has just got miraculously healed?

Instead of jumping for joy and rejoicing that this man was healed, the Jewish Leaders are complaining that somebody has "broken the rules" (as they perceived and understood them). Remember, Jesus later makes it very clear, that man is Lord of the Sabbath, and that the Sabbath is NOT Lord of Man.

But no! They start planning to kill Him, because He broke the Sabbath (by working ~ doing miracles) on the Sabbath Day, and also that He was going about, doing His Father's business.

Jesus was claiming that God Almighty was His Father. This was totally unacceptable to the Jewish Leaders, even though the Scriptures prophesied just that. Yes, that a virgin would give birth to a Son, and as such, God was taking on the form of human flesh, and walking amongst us, to experience the same trials and temptations as the rest of mankind.

Have you ever been in a church and someone new comes along, and starts teaching the scriptures with revelation and authority, and starts to challenge the leaders regarding their attitudes and their teachings? Have you ever seen their reactions?

This is a threat to their leadership, they will have to deal with this "upstart" who is suggesting that we change the way we have been doing things for the last 1,000 years. Who does He think he is???

Sadly some of you are not laughing, but are nodding your heads, because you have seen this happen in church surroundings in your town or city.

But was Jesus stopped by this opposition? NO! He came to the earth so that not even one soul should be lost. Jesus even made it very plain in verse 19.

19 Jesus replied: *"The Son can do nothing by Himself. He does only what He see the Father doing, and in the same way.* [He changes nothing ~ it is exactly as the Father does]

20 For the Father loves the Son, and tells Him everything He is doing; and the Son will do far more awesome miracles than this man's healing.

21 He will even raise from the dead anyone He wants to, just as the Father does.

22 And the Father leaves all judgement of sin to His Son,

23 so that everyone will honour the Son, just as they honour the Father.

***BUT IF YOU REFUSE TO HONOUR God's Son, whom He sent to you, then you are certainly not honouring the Father~* [Either].**

24 "I say emphatically, that anyone who listens to my message and believes in God who sent me has eternal life, and will never be damned for his sins, but have already passed out of death into life.

25 And I solemnly declare that the time is coming, in fact, ***it is already here,*** *when the dead shall hear my voice ~ the voice of the Son of God ~ and those who listen shall live".*

Some people today will say that Jesus was talking to the leadership of the Jewish Sanhedrin, to the Pharisees and the Sadducees, so this portion of scripture does not apply to us ~ **but they would be wrong**, because Jesus was prophetically forecasting what was going to happen "in their lifetimes".

Jesus would be crucified, and would go down into hell and speak to the dead, who had never heard a message about the Messiah.

All those (from the beginning of time until that date) both Jews and Gentiles, of all tribes, nations and tongues, would hear the gospel message and be given an opportunity to accept Jesus as their Saviour ~ even though they were dead.

Jesus then goes on to promise that those who heard (both Jews and Gentiles) his message and accepted it would be raised up out of hell and positioned into paradise ~~ they would live. So, what is the difference today? NONE!

Jesus has promised us that if we (who are alive today) both Jews and Gentiles, who hear His message and accept that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Messiah, and accept Him as their Saviour, they shall be receive eternal life.

26 The Father has life in Himself, and He has granted his Son to have life in himself,

27 ***And to judge the sins of all mankind,*** *because He is the Son of Man.*

Here, Jesus makes a very interesting proclamation; God the Father has given Jesus, His Son, the authority to judge the sin of ALL mankind.

This means that Jesus is given the authority to judge the sins of all peoples, tribes and tongues, of all nations and generations from Adam, until He returns to claim His bride.

It does not matter whether you follow Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, or any other "ism", God Almighty, the creator of the universe, has given this authority to His Son.

The scriptures are very clear; if you hear the message and accept it you will be given life, but if you hear the message and reject it, you will be given death, because your sins will not be covered with the blood of Jesus, and therefore, you will be held accountable for your sins.

Romans 3:23 states that ALL have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

In John 14:6; Jesus makes a declaration when He says; "I AM the way, (I AM) the truth, and (I AM) the life, **NO MAN (OR WOMAN)** comes the Father except through ME (I AM).

I have added in brackets the extra (I AM's) because when translators made the translation into English they were lazy and these words are left out, because we "assume that they are there".

28 Don't be surprised! Indeed the time is coming when ALL of the dead in their graves (all over the earth) shall hear the voice of God's Son,

29 and shall rise again ~ those who have done good (by God's standards ~ not man's standards) to eternal life; and those who have continued in evil, to judgement.

30 But I pass no judgement without (first) consulting the Father. I judge as I am told. And my judgement is absolutely fair and just, for it is according to the (perfect) will of God, who sent me and it is not merely my own.

31 When I make claims about myself they are not believed,

32, 33 but someone else, YES, John the Baptist, is making these claims for me too. You have gone out to listen to him preaching, and I can assure you that all that he says about me is true.

34 But the truest witness I have is not from man, though I have reminded you about John's witness so that you will believe in me and be saved.

35 John shone brightly for a while, and you benefited and rejoiced,

36 But I have a greater witness than John. I refer to the miracles I do; these have been assigned me by the Father, and they prove that the Father has sent me.

37 And the Father Himself has also testified about me, though not appearing to you personally, or speaking to you directly.

38 But you are not listening to him, for you refuse to believe me ~ the one sent to you with God's message.

Jesus is saying to the Jewish leaders and to all those gathered around him; the Jewish leaders speak the word, but I actually do the works, that my Father has sent me to do. My witness is in the doing of miracles. This word was later confirmed in the scriptures that we too, have to be "doers" of the word, not "hearers" (or speakers) of the word only.

39 You search the scriptures because you think they give you eternal life. ***BUT the scriptures point to me.***

40 Yet you refuse to come to me to receive this life.

Jesus is telling the Jewish leaders (and the crowd) that they have no spirit of discernment, or revelation, operating in their hearts, because the scriptures which they all claim to know and understand, is clearly pointing the Jesus, the child born of a virgin, as prophesied in the book of Isaiah; but yet they don't recognise him, for who he is; but if they did and come to him they all would receive eternal life.

41 Your approval means nothing to me.

42 Because I know that you do not have God's love within you.

43 For I have come in my Father's name, and you have rejected me. Yet, if others come in their own name, you gladly welcome them.

44 No wonder you can't believe! For you gladly honour each other, but you don't care about the honour that comes from the one who alone is God.

Jesus is politely telling the Jewish leadership that they are a mob of hypocrites, and he goes on to show, that even Moses will accuse you.

45 Yet it isn't I who will accuse you before the Father. Moses will accuse you. Yes, Moses in whom you put your hopes.

46 If you really believed Moses, you would believe me, because he wrote about me.

47 But if you don't believe what he wrote (about me), how will you believe what I say?

Jesus mentions elsewhere in the scriptures that if the scales were removed off their spiritual eyes, they would be able to see spiritual things. And if their spiritual ears were unblocked, then they would be able to hear spiritual things from heaven, but they are a stiff-necked people.

So, after looking at this chapter, have you recognised Jesus for who he is ~ or are you like the Jewish leaders, going around with closed spiritual eyes, ears and minds?

CHAPTER 9: WHO IS THE KING OF PEACE?

The scripture says that Jesus Christ is the "**King of Kings"** and the **"Lord of Lords"** and **"God of Gods".** The scripture also says that Jesus is the **"Prince of Peace".**
A person is called a "Prince", because their father, is a King. Therefore, Who is the "King of Peace"? Let us see what the scriptures say.
Ezra 7:12 (KJV): [12] **Artaxerxes**, **king of kings**, unto Ezra the priest, a scribe of the law of the God of heaven, perfect *peace*, and at such a time.
Ezekiel 26:7 (KJV): [7] For thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will bring upon Tyrus **Nebuchadnezzar** king of Babylon, **a king of kings**, from the north, with horses, and with chariots, and with horsemen, and companies, and much people.
Daniel 2:37 (KJV): [37] Thou, **O king, *art* a king of kings**: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory.
1 Timothy 6:14 (KJV): [14] That thou keep *this* commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ:
1 Timothy 6:15 (KJV): [15] Which in his times he shall show, *who is* the blessed and only Potentate, **the King of kings, and Lord of lords;**
Revelation 17:14 (KJV): [14] These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is **Lord of lords**, and **King of kings**: and they that are with him *are* called, and chosen, and faithful.
Revelation 19:16 (KJV): [16] And he hath on *his* vesture and on his thigh a name written, **KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.**
Deuteronomy 10:17 (KJV): [17] For the LORD your God ***is* God of gods**, and **Lord of lords**, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward:
Psalm 136:3 (KJV): [3] O give thanks to **the Lord of lords**: for his mercy *endureth* forever.
Joshua 22:22 (KJV): [22] The LORD **God of gods**, the LORD **God of gods**, he knoweth, and Israel he shall know; if *it be* in rebellion, or if in transgression against the LORD, (save us not this day.)
Daniel 2:47 (KJV): [47] The king answered unto Daniel, and said, of a truth *it is*, that your God ***is* a God of gods**, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou could reveal this secret.
Daniel 11:36 (KJV): [36] And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvelous things against the **God of gods,** and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done.
Isaiah 9:6 (KJV): [6] For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The **Prince of Peace**.
Hebrews 7:1 (KJV): [1] For this **Melchizedek**, **king of Salem, priest of the most-high God**, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him;
Hebrews 7:2 (KJV): [2] To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation **King of righteousness**, and after that also **King of Salem, which is, King of peace**;
Hebrews 7:3 (KJV): [3] Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abides a priest continually.
This is why Jesus is referred to as the High Priest of the Order on Melchizedek.

CHAPTER 10: FIRST EDITION OF THE KING JAMES BIBLE

Now many people, reading this heading may say, so what? Why is it so important to understand there were different editions of the King James Bible?

When King James announced that he wanted an "official" Bible in the English language, he appointed 52 "scholars," to translate the known oldest known texts (at that time), into the English language.

At this stage, in 1610, America was still under British rule, so there were some "British Americans" also included in the mix. However, some of these people loved their alcohol too much, and never actually got involved in the translations, and historians, credit 47 people for doing this task.

In earlier editions of the "English Bible" the Apocrypha was included; lodged between the Old Testament and the New Testament. Many protestants will be surprised to realize that in the First Edition, the Apocrypha was also included in the FIRST EDITION of the King James. It is NOT just a "Catholic Thing".

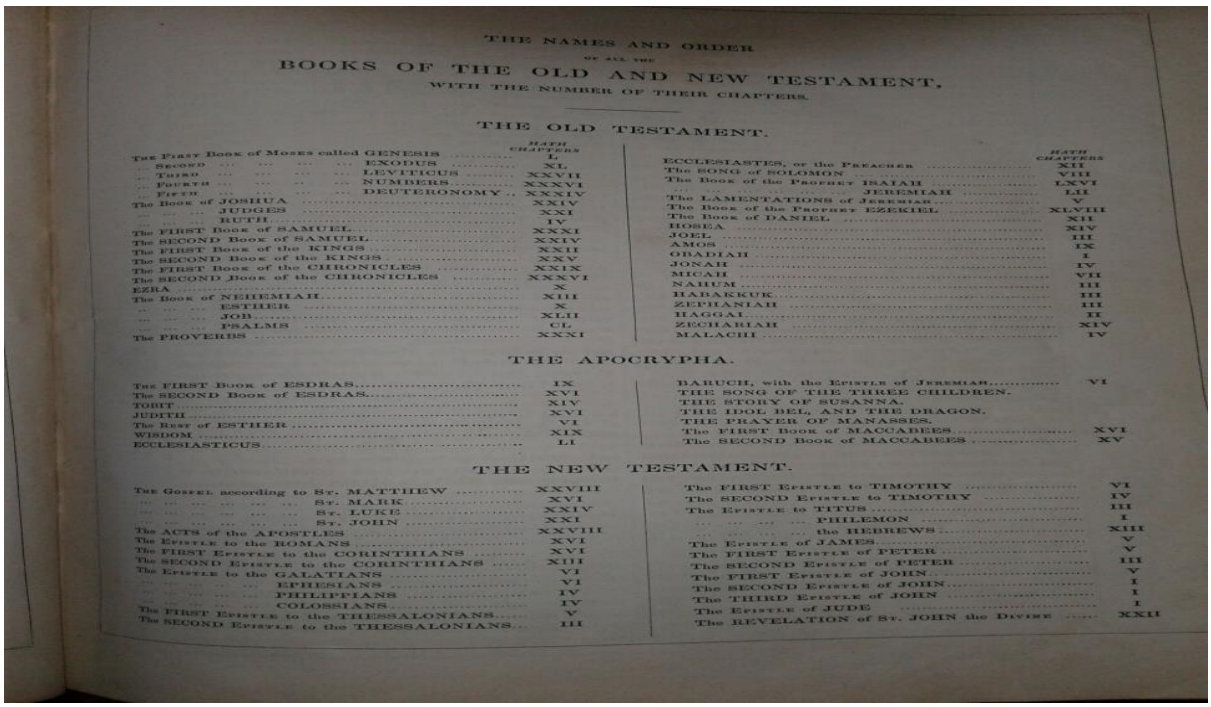
The 15 books of the Apocrypha have always been included in the Holy Bible placed between the Old and New Testament. It was in John Wycliffe's Bible in 1384, and it was in Luther's Bible of 1534, that the Apocrypha was first published as a separate inter-testamental section. The Apocrypha was part of the original 1611 King James Bible. **It was later removed in 1885 A.D.** The word 'Apocrypha' literally means 'hidden'. Fragments of Dead Sea Scrolls dating back to before 70 A.D. contained parts of the apocrypha books in Hebrew, including Sirach and Tobit. Many argue the Apocrypha should never have been removed reciting Revelation 22:19 which warns "And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life".

Now, there are copies of the FIRST EDITION Bible available (if you are very rich, and can afford to purchase them, as collector items), but here is a copy of the index of a First Edition Bible, so that everyone can verify this for themselves. The listed Book of the Apocrypha are clearly shown.

So, for over 200 hundred years AFTER the King Kames Bible was originally published, this was part of the Bible that was preached from in every Protestant Church around the world.

Do you realize that when Rev. Richard Johnson first preached his famous first sermon in Sydney Cove, New South Wales, on the 3rd February 1788, that his Bible would have contained the Apocrypha?

Many Protestants have never read any of the books from this series, but maybe you should. Many Pastors have never preached out of these books, but maybe they should.



THE NAMES AND ORDER
OF ALL THE
BOOKS OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT,
WITH THE NUMBER OF THEIR CHAPTERS.

THE OLD TESTAMENT.

	HATH CHAPTERS
The First Book of Moses called GENESIS	L
... Second ... EXODUS	XL
... Third ... LEVITICUS	XXVII
... Fourth ... NUMBERS	XXXVI
... Fifth ... DEUTERONOMY	XXXIV
The Book of JOSHUA	XXIV
... JUDGES	XXI
... RUTH	IV
The FIRST Book of SAMUEL	XXI
The SECOND Book of SAMUEL	XXIV
The FIRST Book of the KINGS	XXII
The SECOND Book of the KINGS	XXV
The FIRST Book of the CHRONICLES	XXIX
The SECOND Book of the CHRONICLES	XXXVI
EZRA	X
The Book of NEHEMIAH	XIII
... ESTHER	X
... JOB	XLII
... PSALMS	CL
The PROVERBS	XXXI
ECCLESIASTES, or the Preacher	XII
The SONG of SOLOMON	VIII
The Book of the Prophet ISAIAH	LXVI
... JEREMIAH	LII
The LAMENTATIONS of Jeremiah	V
The Book of the Prophet EZEKIEL	XLVIII
The Book of DANIEL	XII
HOSEA	XIV
JOEL	III
AMOS	IX
OBADIAH	I
JONAH	IV
MICAH	VII
NAHUM	III
HABAKKUK	III
ZEPHANIAH	III
HAGGAI	II
ZECHARIAH	XIV
MALACHI	IV

THE APOCRYPHA.

The FIRST Book of ESDRAS	IX
The SECOND Book of ESDRAS	XVI
TOBIT	XIV
JUDITH	XVI
The Rest of ESTHER	VI
WISDOM	XIX
ECCLESIASTICUS	LI
BARUCH, with the Epistle of Jeremiah	VI
THE SONG OF THE THREE CHILDREN.	
THE STORY OF SUSANNA.	
THE IDOL BEL, AND THE DRAGON.	
THE PRAYER OF MANASSES.	
The FIRST Book of MACCABEES	XVI
The SECOND Book of MACCABEES	XV

THE NEW TESTAMENT.

The Gospel according to St. MATTHEW	XXVIII
... St. MARK	XVI
... St. LUKE	XXIV
... St. JOHN	XXI
The ACTS of the APOSTLES	XXVIII
The Epistle to the ROMANS	XVI
The FIRST Epistle to the CORINTHIANS	XVI
The SECOND Epistle to the CORINTHIANS	XIII
The Epistle to the GALATIANS	VI
... EPHESIANS	VI
... PHILIPPIANS	IV
... COLOSSIANS	IV
The FIRST Epistle to the THESSALONIANS	V
The SECOND Epistle to the THESSALONIANS	III
The FIRST Epistle to TIMOTHY	VI
The SECOND Epistle to TIMOTHY	IV
The Epistle to TITUS	III
... PHILEMON	I
... the HEBREWS	XIII
The Epistle of JAMES	V
The FIRST Epistle of PETER	V
The SECOND Epistle of PETER	III
The FIRST Epistle of JOHN	V
The SECOND Epistle of JOHN	I
The THIRD Epistle of JOHN	I
The Epistle of JUDE	I
The REVELATION of St. JOHN the Divine	XXII

CHAPTER 11: LEVITICUS CHAPTER 11, VERSES 2-24

Speak unto the children of Israel, saying; **These *are* the beasts which ye shall eat** among all the beasts that *are* on the earth.

Whatsoever parts the hoof, and is cloven-footed, *and* chews the cud, among the beasts, that shall ye eat.

Nevertheless, these shall **ye not eat,** of them that chew the cud, or of them that divide the hoof: *as* the camel, because he chews the cud, but divides not the hoof; he *is* unclean unto you.

And the coney (a rabbit), because he chews the cud, but divides not the hoof; he *is* unclean unto you.

And the hare, because he chews the cud, but divides not the hoof; he *is* unclean unto you.

And the swine, though he divides the hoof, and be clove-footed, yet he chews not the cud; he *is* unclean to you.

Of their flesh shall ye not eat, and their carcass shall ye not touch; they *are* unclean to you.

These shall ye eat of all that *are* in the waters: **whatsoever hath fins and scales in the waters, in the seas, and in the rivers, them shall ye eat**.

And all that **have not fins and scales** in the seas, and in the rivers, of all that move in the waters, and of any living thing which *is* in the waters, they *shall be* an abomination unto you:

They shall be even an abomination unto you; ye shall not eat of their flesh, but ye shall have their carcasses in abomination.

Whatsoever hath no fins nor scales in the waters, that *shall be* an abomination unto you.

And these *are they which* ye shall have in abomination among the fowls; **they shall not be eaten**, they *are* an abomination: the eagle, and the ossifrage, and the osprey; And the vulture, and the kite after his kind; Every raven after his kind; And the owl, and the night hawk, and the cuckoo, and the hawk after his kind; And the little owl, and the cormorant, and the great owl; And the swan, and the pelican, and the giber eagle; And the stork, the heron after her kind, and the lapwing, and the bat. All fowls that creep, going upon *all* four, *shall be* an abomination unto you.

Yet these **may ye eat of every flying creeping thing that goes upon *all* four, which have legs above their feet, to leap withal upon the earth**;

Even these of them ye may eat; **the locust after his kind, and the bald locust after his kind, and the beetle after his kind, and the grasshopper after his kind**.
But all *other* flying creeping things, which have four feet, *shall be* an abomination unto you.
And for these ye shall be unclean: whosoever touches the carcass of them shall be unclean until the even.

CHAPTER 12: LOVE THE MOTHER OF YOUR CHILDREN

In the Focus on the Family Program yesterday, the speaker made a very interesting statement. He said the best thing any father can do is to love his wife, the mother of his children.

He said that showing love to your wife was very important, as it instils trust and peace within the household and this is transferred to your children.

Jesus said it quite clearly in Matthew Chapter 5: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God."

In a house where peace reigns, tension and strife cannot abound. These things are replaced by trust and love.

Jesus told us that husbands are to love and honour their wives, just as we are to love and honour Christ.

When we have an attitude of love towards our spouses, it is reflected back to us by our wives. This in turn is observed by our children and a sense of security is borne out in their souls and their spirits.

When children feel secure in the home, they flourish in their schoolwork, are less troublesome and disobedient in their relationships with others, both at home and at school.

If you are having problems with your children at home, or at their school, then maybe it is time to take an audit of your home situation with your wife, or the mother of your children.

Do you show love to your wife in the presence of your children, or do they see you continually at each other's throats, whether verbally or physically?

Is your place a home which other people feel comfortable when visiting, or are they stepping on egg shells, because they can feel the tension in the house and can almost cut it with a knife?

In our enlightened society, we think we know better than God and so we have developed a society where divorce is now common place.

In today's society here in Australia more than 30% of all married couples are divorced, or will end up divorced.

Sadly, it is no longer common practice for the husband to stay with the mother of his children, and together raise them up to be God loving, caring teenagers, and later adults.

So now the problems are starting to be seen more clearly. Dysfunctional families breed dysfunctional children.

Dysfunctional children have more problems adjusting to society, because they don't have the love and trust models, which God laid down for all of us in His word.

As we come to the end of this Family month celebrations for this year, let us reflect on our own individual family situations.

Are we bringing up our children as God Almighty said we should? If not, then we must change our relationships with our wives, or the mothers of our children, so that they can feel loved and secure, in the home situation in which they live.

If you don't know how to change, or need help in doing so, there are many places which will give you the support you need. Start with your local pastors, or contact the Parenting Support Group right here in Toowoomba, who have trained personnel and volunteers who will come along side you and mentor your whole family.

Remember, your children are your inheritance to the future of this nation.

CHAPTER 13: MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIPS

The scripture tells us that the family is the foundation of society. When explorers went into nations where the scripture had not been before, there was still evidence that the family is the basis for all forms of society.

Therefore, a successful marriage, brings joy to the extended family, and the community where you live, even if you do not know about Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour.

But as many of you know, marriages can also bring challenging problems. So tonight, let us look at ways we can improve our marriages and hence improve the joy of your family and the community in which you live.

Proverbs 18:22 says: *Whosoever finds a wife, finds a good thing, and obtains favour of the LORD.*

The scripture tells us that if you find a wife, then you find a good thing. Not only that, the word says you also find **favour with the Lord**. Isn't that a wonderful revelation**? Did you know that?**

So tonight, hands up all the people in the congregation who are married. Do you realise men that when you found your wife - you found a good thing?

Do we have anyone here who has been married for more than 50 years?

Do we have anyone here who has been married for more than 40 years?

Do we have anyone here who has been married for more than 30 years?

Do we have anyone here who has been married for more than 20 years?

OK Stand up.

Give them all a clap, to praise the Lord.

In the New Living translation, it says that you when you find a wife you have found a treasure. Do you realise men that you have found a treasure when you found your wife and that you have **also found favour with the Lord.**

Isn't that a mighty revelation? Are you happy about that?

Rani and I celebrated our 30th wedding anniversary this month, just before we came to Africa on this trip, and let me tell you, I found a real treasure when I found my wife.

She is worthy of recognition, honour and praise. She has been faithful to God and her marriage, and she has kept me healthy, and made sure that I followed the calling that God has placed upon my life.

God has really shown His favour towards us, by continually blessing us with His bounty, with His compassion and mercy. The same can apply to all of you.

So, if the word says that you have found a good thing when you found your wife, and that you have found favour with the Lord, (because you have a wife) why do some of you mistreat your wives so badly?

The word says to love your wife, as you love yourselves, and to love her, as you love God in heaven.

My questions tonight may cause some of you some embarrassment or discomfort.

You may feel uncomfortable, you may feel uneasy. But please realise that is not me speaking to your hearts and your consciousness, but the Holy Spirit speaking to you through my words.

My first question:

Why don't you love your wives like the word says that you should?

Don't you want to acknowledge before others, that in your wife, you have found a good thing: that you have found a real living treasure?

Don't you want to acknowledge before others, that you have found favour in the eyes of God?

Don't you realise that God gives and God takes away?

If you do not treat your wife properly, do you realise that the blessings of God, and the favour of God can be removed from you, and you will be out from under God's protection.

This means that Satan can attack you, and your family, whenever he chooses, because the protection of God has been removed from you.

My Second Question:

Why do you embarrass God by being unfaithful to your wife, and breaking the holy vow that you made before God, and the congregation, when you got married?

God's word says that marriage is a holy estate. God considers marriage as an everlasting covenant, which can only be broken by death.

In the marriage vows, we pledge ourselves to each other for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, till death us do part.

Why do you not honour these vows, that were made on your wedding day before God?

Do you think that God does not know the evil, which has been allowed to dwell in your hearts?

Do you think that God was not watching when you were unfaithful to your wife, or to your husband?

But you say; I have not done any evil things. I have not been unfaithful to my husband or to my wife.

Do you realise in the book of Matthew it says that if you look at a woman (or a man) and think lustful thoughts in your mind, then you have already committed adultery with her in your heart? You have been unfaithful to your wife.

The word says that you cannot get salty water and fresh water from the same well. Therefore, you cannot have good and evil living in the same place.

Where there is good there is light. When there is evil present there is darkness. Light and darkness cannot dwell in the same place, at the same time, because light casts out darkness.

Can the Holy Spirit dwell in a house which has evil inside it? No!

Throughout the Bible, there are many references to being holy, as God Almighty is holy, as Jesus Christ is holy, as the Holy Spirit is holy.

Why do you think that is so?

Do you realise that the scripture tells us that we are the temple of the Holy Ghost? That the Holy Ghost dwells within us?

That means that our body must be kept as a clean place, because the Holy Spirit of God has taken up residence there, or wants to take up residence there.

Now I know that before every service in your churches, you take great care to make sure that the church is clean, that there are nice flowers in the church entrance, or inside the church.

You want it is be a place of reverence – a holy place - a place where you will welcome God to come and dwell during the service.

Why? Because the scripture tells us that where 2 or 3 are gathered together in the mighty name of Jesus Christ, He will come and dwell with them.

It also says that Jesus Christ dwells in the praises of His people. Therefore, Jesus is here with us tonight.

Again, I remind you that Jesus and the Holy Spirit did not come here tonight because of the bricks and the mortar of this place – but because we, the people are here.

Jesus comes and lives and dwells in and among His people – the people who love Him and who follow His commandments.

But do you think Jesus will come and dwell in a house filled with cigarettes, drugs, or other sins - within the house, which is your body?

Do you think that the Holy Spirit will dwell there? NO!

So how do we turn this situation around?

The scripture says that God will never leave us nor forsake us. He might withhold His blessings. He might allow you to suffer trials and tribulations, because of your disobedience to His commandments or to His word.

But He is always ready and waiting to forgive those who ask Him. He is always ready to come back into your life, and bless you, with all the promises of heaven.

Tonight, He is waiting to forgive you for the way you have treated your wife or your husband in the past, and ready to bless your marriage once again.

So that your marriage continues to be a blessing, and a witness to your family and the community in which you live, I will now list 5 ways that you can improve your marriage and keep it holy.

<u>Point 1</u>: Give 100 per cent to your marriage.

The old saying that marriage is a 50-50 proposition is totally wrong. Both partners in the marriage must give a 100 per cent commitment to the marriage, for it to glorify God Almighty and to allow Him to show His protection and favour towards both of you.

If you give only 50 per cent, then only expect a 50 PERCENT RESULT. You will only get 50 per cent of God's protection and favour.

I don't know about you, but I want all of God's protection and all of His favour, not just half of it. So, make a 100 per cent commitment to your marriage.

<u>Point 2</u>: Honour and respect your Spouse.

This is one area of marriage where very easily you can fail without thinking. You can easily lapse into a way of talking or action, which does not bring respect to your wife, and hence not bring respect or honour to God Almighty.

I am not perfect, and I know that I am guilty of this problem from time to time, and I know that my wife suffers quietly because of it.

But you see God reminds us that we were made in His image, and when we fail to honour our wives, or our husbands, and then we fail to honour God Almighty and His Son Jesus Christ.

This is not a good witness to our family members, to our children, or the extended family in which we live.

Worse of all, this is not a good witness to the unbelievers in the community, who see this, and wonder if this is what a Christian should be, and how a Christian should live.

The answer to this is obvious. NO!

It is not how a Christian family should be, and it is not how a sacred marriage should be. It is not the witness that we should be showing to our children, nor the extended family in which we live. It is definitely not the witness that we should be showing to the unbelievers in the community in which we live.

Therefore, we must make an effort to change it. We must ask God to show us when we do things which bring disrespect upon our wives or husbands, so that we can refrain from doing them in the future.

<u>Point 3</u>: Set a Positive Example in our Marriages

The Apostle Peter gave instructions for Christians to set a good example, even to their non-Christian mates.

God gives this commandment to the women.

In 1 Peter 3:1-2 it says: Wives, likewise be submissive to your husbands, that even if some do not obey the word of God, they, without a word, in silence, maybe won over by the conduct of their wives, when they observe your chaste conduct, accompanied by reverent fear of the Lord.

Remember we cannot change another person against his or her will. But we can change ourselves. God has given all of us, God-given responsibilities in our marriages and in our families.

God gives this commandment to the Men.

In Ephesians 5:25 "Husbands, love only your wives, just as Jesus loved the Church and gave Himself for her.

Are you, as a husband, fulfilling your responsibilities, as laid down in this scripture?

Remember, we must all stand before the judgement seat of Jesus Christ and give an account of our lives, before Him.

In Romans 14:10 it says: Be sure that you are fulfilling your own God-given responsibilities, as a husband or a wife.

Setting a positive example therefore is not an option.

It is a commandment of God. If we fail to do this, then we are in fact in direct rebellion against God's word. We are in fact committing sin.

We are told to keep small accounts with God, so that our sins can be forever covered with the blood of Jesus Christ.

We must ask God's forgiveness if we have not shown a positive example in our marriages.

<u>Point 4:</u> Communicate in love with our partners in marriage

In this modern-day society, where we seem to ever so busy, it is so easy to tune out our wives, or our husbands, to ignore their conversations, or to not really hear what they are saying to us. (Selective deafness)

As you live in the Eastern culture, you will know that women do not always speak to you directly about a problem. They go around it and mention parts of the problem, but not speak of the problem directly.

If you have tuned out your partner, you will not be sensitive to what she is really trying to say to you.

She is being submissive to you, but she is also trying to make you realise there is a problem which must be addressed and fixed for things to get back into God's perfect will. She is talking to you in love, so that you will not be hurt, or get angry.

If you do get angry, then you have a problem. You just let Satan into your heart to do damage to the relationship, which God says is holy.

Even when you have to deal with "tough stuff" it must be done in love, without hurting the other person, or doing damage to the relationship.

Is this easy? NO! But remember God wants your relationship in your marriage to reflect His glory.

A marriage relationship is like the love which exists between Jesus Christ and the Church.

In many places in the scripture, Jesus is referred to as the Bridegroom and the Church as the Bride.

The scripture tells us that Jesus Christ is coming back to earth to collect His perfect bride – those in the churches, who have remained faithful to His word and to His commandments.

Right throughout the scriptures, Jesus always communicates through His love for us. That is why He came down to earth, to show us, by His example, how we are to relate to one another.

Therefore, in our marriages, the only way that we can communicate to one another and give God glory is through Love.

<u>Point 5</u>: Pray Together

Today we must realise that the miracles of the Old Testament and those of the New Testament only happened because people come to realise the power of prayer.

PRAYER CHANGES THINGS! NO PRAYER – NO CHANGE!

If you want to make changes in your marriage, then you must make time to pray together.

For some of you this might be difficult, because you wife, or your husband has slipped back into the ways of the unbeliever, or they may have never become a Christian in the first place.

But that does not stop you for praying for them and for your marriage. Again, I remind you that "Prayer changes things." If you do not pray there will never be a change.

You might say: But pastor, I have been praying to the Lord about this problem for many years and still I don't see any change.

Tonight, I tell you. Don't give up on them, because God has not finished with them yet. God is testing your trust in Him, your faithfulness to obey His commandments, and pray for your spouses.

Don't stop praying for them, because I know God will hear your prayers and in His perfect timing, He will move in this situation so that the change in your partner will bring glory and honour to Jesus Christ.

So tonight, I want to encourage you not to give up on your marriages, nor on your partners in those marriages.

God wants your marriages to be a reflection of His glory here on earth.

God wants them to be a positive witness to the unbelievers in your community where you live.

God wants the unbelievers to know that Marriage is sacred and those who do sexual things outside of marriage are in fact violating His commandments and are falling into the kingdom of darkness.

The good news is that Jesus came to earth to forgive all of us who are sinners and to bring us back into a relationship with God which is perfect.

Tonight, He wants to give you this opportunity to ask forgiveness of your wives and your husbands and to ask Jesus to forgive you of your sins.

If you know what has been said tonight affects you in your marriage, or in your relationships with others, then please come out the front so that the pastors and elders can pray to the Father, through the blood of Jesus for forgiveness of your sins.

If you are single, but have had relationships which do not bring glory and honour to Jesus Christ, then I invite you to come forward and ask Jesus to cover these sins and to bring you back to a position of righteousness before the Father.

As the musicians play quietly, I ask the congregation to pray for all those who are coming forward.

I ask that they pray for all the married couples who are here this evening. Also, to pray for those marriages, where only one of the couples are present, so that God will bless the partner who is not here this evening and bring this marriage to a place of glory in His sight.

For all those couples who are thinking about getting married. I ask that you come forward and stand to one side, so that the pastors and elders can pray for you.

Let us close this service now in prayer.

Heavenly Father, we come before you this evening to give you glory and honour, in our lives and in our marriages.

We ask that the words spoken tonight will be as seeds planted in good soil and that they will grow and bear much good fruit in the days and years to come.

We ask these things in the wonderful name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

And everybody said: Amen.

CHAPTER 14: MATTHEW 6:33

"But seek you first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and these things shall be added unto you".

When we come to church on Sunday, we naturally look around the room to see who is there and to go to speak to these people we know and love, and with whom we have built up a close relationship. We do this because we recognise them physically, and also by their voices. We know from experience that we can trust them.

There are other people we see at church, who we recognise, but who we don't know on a personal relationship basis, so we acknowledge them, we nod our heads to them, we speak a greeting to them, but that is as far as the relationship goes.

In 2013 God wants to take us "past the outer courts" and into His Holy Place; to a place of close intimacy with Him.

The scripture in Matthew 6:33 says, "**But" seek first the kingdom.**

In the previous verses, Jesus has been talking about other things. But here in verse 33 Jesus sets the priority; but first, seek the kingdom.

However, we cannot seek first the kingdom, unless we know who the king is, what His characteristics are, and where the king is.

Jesus wants us to recognise Him, just like we do with our friends, by His physical and spiritual appearance, by His character, and by His voice.
He wants us to get to know Him in such a way, that we can talk to Him about anything, knowing that he will always listen, that He will always give you perfect advice, and that He will never gossip about you, or betray your confidentiality.

Jesus wants you to learn to trust Him, so that you know you can tell Him anything, knowing He will not confide it to anyone. Jesus wants you to realise that Jesus Christ is your perfect friend.
Once you know who the king is, then Jesus can introduce you to His kingdom. It is His desire to see His kingdom come, here on earth right now, dwelling within each heart, here on earth. Jesus wants us to recognise that we are the temple of the Holy Spirit, the living stones of His holy temple here on earth.
Once His kingdom is established here in each heart, then this church becomes His Kingdom here in Toowoomba, a mighty fortress for our God.

Then Jesus says that the second priority is: **to seek His righteousness**.

Righteousness means: **"right standing with God."**

Jesus wants us to learn from His word, what Jesus considers to be **right,** and what Jesus considers to be **wrong**. We cannot do this by just attending church on a Sunday, waiting for the pastor to give us a 40-minute scripture meal, which must last us all week.

Each of us must become a disciple, **"a disciplined one",** who undertakes private bible study **<u>every day.</u>**

Jeremiah 31:31-33 prophesied that the new covenant would not be a covenant with circumcision of the flesh, but would be a circumcision of the heart, and that the Holy Spirit would become our teacher.

Once we understand what God says is right and what God says is wrong, then we have to take a stand for issues in the natural world.

We have to consciously make a decision, to stand on God's side of all issues.

- Will this be popular at all times? NO!
- Will we be persecuted for taking this stand? YES!

Jesus already told us in His word, that if we follow Him; **<u>expect to be offended.</u>**

Jesus told us that as they persecuted Him (the evil ones – the unrighteous) so they will persecute all who stand up for His name and for His precepts.

Last year we actually saw that happen to our church.

Pastor David proclaimed from this pulpit that the Gay Rights movement was evil and what they were trying to do, by changing the marriage laws of the state and the nation was wrong.

Unrighteous people rose up and threatened to kick us out of this building. Others wrote defamatory articles about this church in the press.

But praise the Lord, God's word is true. He said that if we seek His face and seek His kingdom and stand up for righteousness, **all these things shall be added unto you.**

- We got favour with the Bishop from Brisbane and were not kicked out of the building.
- We sent petitions to the State & Federal governments and the bills were defeated.
- I proclaim that later even the Toowoomba Telegraph will come out in favour of this church, as they start to see what God is going to do through this church because we stand up for righteousness.

All these things shall be added unto you. What things? The things that Jesus was talking about in Matthew Chapter 5, and the first 32 verses of Matthew chapter 6. They are the promises that we can claim, if we obey the first part of Matthew 6:33.

This is how the Holy Spirit talks to me, through His word, and through my deep conversations with Him each day, as I take my 3 Km-walk around Newtown Park. Sometimes this conversation is so intense that when I finish my walk, I realise that I have walked not 3 Kms but 6 Kms. This is good for the body and also good for the soul. Try it!!!

CHAPTER 15: REFUGEE SUNDAY

I thank Major Kevin and Valmae for the opportunity to speak to you today. Today is a special day. It is called Refugee Sunday, and today I want to focus on that theme.

- Stand up all those who were not born in Australia and remain standing.
- Now stand up if your parents, grandparents, were not born in this country, or if your forefather came out in the first fleet.

So those who are still seated must be all "original Australians". The rest of us are all descendants of migrants or refugees.

God Almighty has some interesting things to say about refugees and/or foreigners, and we must recognise according to scripture, this is what most of us are.

In Isaiah 56:1-3, it says: *This is what the Lord says: "Maintain justice and do what is right, for my salvation is right at hand and my righteousness will soon be revealed. Blessed is the man who does this, the man who holds it fast, who keeps the Sabbath without desecrating it, and keeps his hand from doing any evil." Let no foreigner who has bound himself to the Lord say, "The Lord will surely exclude me from His people". And let not any eunuch complain, "I am a dry tree". ...*

Verses 6-7: And foreigners who bind themselves to the Lord to serve Him, to love the name of the Lord, and to worship him, all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it and who holds fast to my covenant - these I will bring to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on my altar, FOR MY HOUSE WILL BE CALLED A HOUSE OF PRAYER FOR ALL NATIONS."

Today we have come into His house to give Him worship, honour and praise, because He is worthy of all of these things from us.

- He alone is our salvation.
- He alone is our protection.
- He alone gives us health, wisdom and insight into the plans and purposes He has for each of us.

- Even though we were not the original owners of this land, Jesus tells us in the scriptures that He knew us even before the foundation of the world.
- He knew us in the womb, while we were growing, before we were born, and He had already set our paths before us.

In Romans 8:28 it says: And we know that all that happens to us is working for our good, **IF** we love God and (**IF**) we are fitting into His divine plans and His divine purposes.

Notice that this promise of goodness is **conditional** upon what we say and what we do.

The first condition is that we must love God.

How do we love God? By loving one another, both believer and unbeliever alike. Now I know it is easy for us to love our friends , but it very hard to love our enemies.

In fact we cannot do it by our own strength. We have to have the manifested power of the Holy Spirit working inside of us for this to happen.

Only then can we love our enemies and the scripture will be fulfilled, which says that we will be known as Christians by our love.

The second condition is that we are fitting into God's plans for us.

So, my questions to you this morning are these;

1. Do you know what God's plans for you are?
    a. Firstly as individuals,
    b. Secondly as a corporate body of worshippers, and
    c. Thirdly, as part of the One Church in the City.
2. If you don't know, how do you find out what those plans are?

a) Firstly as individuals.

Jeremiah 29:8-13 says: *The Lord God of Hosts, the Lord God of Israel says: Don't let the false prophets and mediums who are there among you fool you, Don't listen to the dreams that they invent. For they prophesy lies in My name. I have not sent them says the Lord.*

The truth is this; You will be in Babylon for a lifetime, but then I will come and do for you all the good things I have promised, and bring you home again.

For I know the plans I have for you says the Lord. They are plans for good and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.

In those days, when you pray, I will listen. You will find me when you seek me, if you look for me in earnest.

Think about that for a moment. Before you were a Christian you were cast out into the world of unbelievers, referred to here by God as Babylon, a place where evil reigns, and where the people worshipped other gods.

In John 15:16 it says that we did not choose Jesus, He chose us and He commanded us to go forth and bear fruit that must remain.

Jesus called us to Himself. He fulfilled His promise. He came to get us and take us back to Himself, so that we will bear fruit which will bring honour and glory to His name.

Jesus goes on to say "Now" that you are back with Me, when you call, I will answer. When you pray, I will listen. These are great promises to hold onto today.

Secondly as a corporate Body of Worshippers.

What does God want this specific congregation to achieve for His glory?

a) Does He want us to welcome foreigners into our midst? God's word says "Yes".
b) Should we make them welcome in this church? God's word says "Yes".
c) Should we encourage them to continue following after false Gods? God's word says "NO"
d) Should we try to ram the Bible down their throats? "NO".

It is by our **"love example"** that they will learn what true Christianity is all about.

True Christianity is not a theoretical thing, that you can learn, pass an exam, and then get a certificate to hang up on your wall.

True Christianity is a living, working entity. It is what people see you doing every day. You become God's Bible, living and walking here on the earth.

If this church can achieve that goal, then this love will attract a multitude of sinners into God's presence, from every walk of life and from every nation represented here in this city.

Thirdly, as part of the "One Church" in the City

Even after 40 years of prayer and fasting many Christians are still coming to grips with this concept that in God's eyes, there is only one church in each town or city, with many parts undertaking different functions.

Here in the Salvation Army we are one part of the bigger picture, which is God's presence in this city and God's plan for this city cannot be achieved unless each and every part of God's church does the part that has been pre-assigned to them.

Kevin has the vision of this church on a banner at the entrance as you come into this building: Grace and mercy, in an attitude of love and gratitude.

That is what this church is all about and as a result, we are seeing lives changed, and people drawn to Jesus, which is our primary role.

So, how do we do this within a community where there are people living in Toowoomba from 136 different countries, who speak more than 22 different languages, and eat many different types of food and wear different types of clothes, to the typical Ozzie?

It is very simple: Just love on them and make them welcome.

In the 33 years that Rani and I have been travelling to/from Australia, we have seen a marked change in the attitude to migrants and refugees in this nation.

Firstly one of suspicion, then acceptance and now open hostility to specific refugee groups, resulting in the torching of the Mosque here in Toowoomba.

As was expected, the Muslims have reacted to this attempt to stop them worshipping in this city.

Toowoomba proudly promotes itself as a "Family City". Unfortunately this incident did not live up to that slogan, nor did it give God any glory.

It is only through our love will we be able to show the Muslims that their ideologies are wrong and that they are doomed for hellfire if they continue down this path.

We must all remember that while **"we"** were yet sinners, Jesus died on the cross for us, **while we were still in our sin**, and in that regard we were no better than the Muslims are right now.

They are still in their sin, because they have not heard the truth, or they have heard the truth and rejected it, just like many others.

When we show our love to them and when we pray for them, Jesus hears our prayers, because His word says that He will listen to us when we pray.

This morning is a different type of service than what you might normally expect, because we are dealing with a different type of problem, which affects the lives of each and every person in this city.

I am asking each person in this church to pray for the Muslims, the Buddhists, the Sikhs and the Hindus, and even for the people who say there is no God.

Pray that God will touch their hearts in a mighty way; that they will know that they have had an encounter with the Almighty God and that they will have to do something, as a result of this encounter.

Let this be the first step in a journey to the truth about Jesus Christ, His life, His sacrifice on the cross for them, His resurrection and how these events can change their lives forever.

Pastor Kevin wanted you all to be challenged this morning. There are pledge cards near the prayer table for all those who pledge to pray for the unbelievers in our city. I invite you to sign one today.

In October 2011, the Muslims in Alexandria in Egypt burnt down a Coptic church which had been in the city for more than 1400 years.

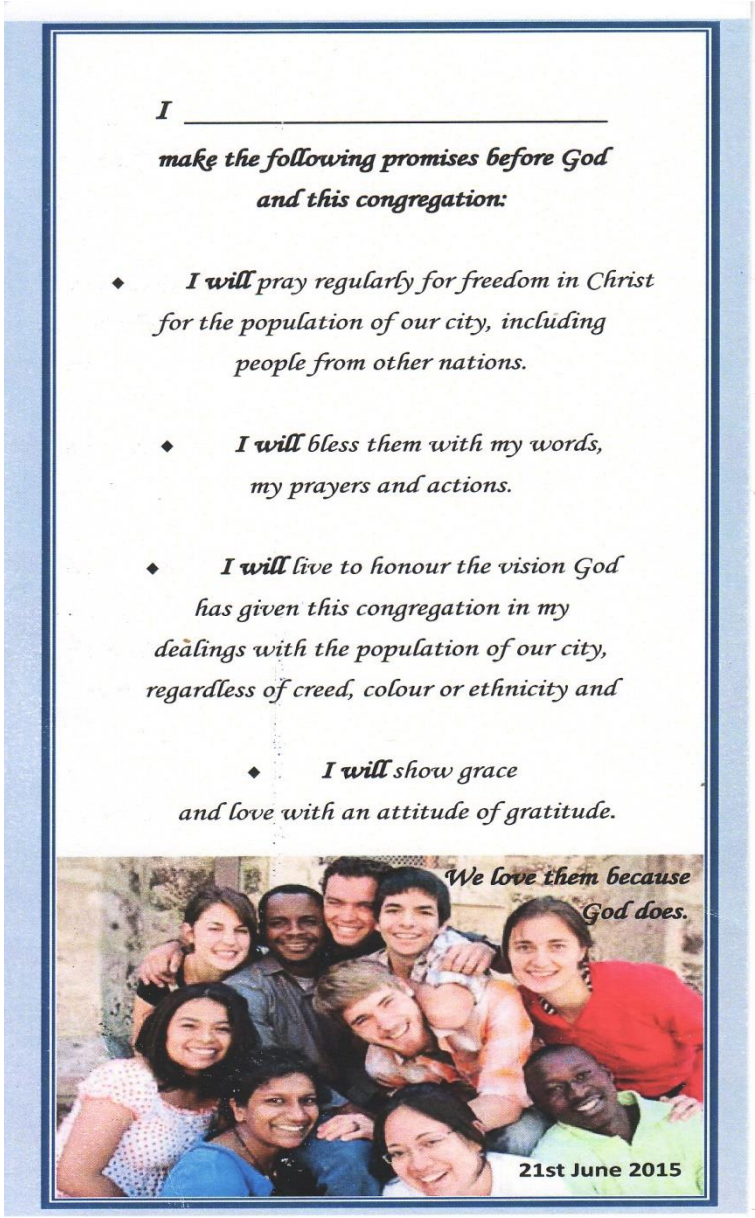
To show that they practised what they preached, they made a large banner and put it in the ruins of their historical church. The slogan on the banner said: **WE FORGIVE YOU!**

Then, on the 11/11/11 they held a worship service in the ruins of the old church and I want to play you the video of this worship service this morning. An estimated 71,000 Christians came together to worship and Praise Jesus More and More.

You may not understand the Arabic language, but I am sure you will understand the love on the faces of the worshippers.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=dPhTEYqinVQ

Let us also be like them and show God's love in this city to all who come here. Let us pray.


I _____

make the following promises before God and this congregation:

- I will pray regularly for freedom in Christ for the population of our city, including people from other nations.
- I will bless them with my words, my prayers and actions.
- I will live to honour the vision God has given this congregation in my dealings with the population of our city, regardless of creed, colour or ethnicity and
- I will show grace and love with an attitude of gratitude.

We love them because God does.

21st June 2015

CHAPTER 16: DO MIRACLES STILL HAPPEN TODAY ?

- Many people have heard about what has happened overseas in Papua New Guinea.
- Some of you have gone there and seen it for yourselves, and you know that God is alive, and He is moving across the world, putting into place His plan for the salvation of mankind.
- Others have remained here in Australia and are a little sceptical about what you hear and what other people have seen.
- Tonight, I want to talk about God's Word and ask you a question: Do you believe Miracles still happen today?
- Many of you do not question, that miracles have occurred in the past. You could probably name several miraculous accounts, that you have heard in Sunday school, or have read in the Scriptures.
- Things like the 10 plagues of Egypt - when Moses went to confront the Pharoah, and asked him to let the people of Israel go.

- The parting of the Red Sea, when Moses took the people across and how it drowned all the Egyptians when they tried to cross.
- Elijah providing food for the widow woman and her son during the drought.
- Elijah praying for the same widow's son the be brought back to life.
- Elisha praying for the life of the Shunamite woman's son.
- Jesus praying for Lazarus to be raised from the dead.
- Saul meeting Jesus, face to face on the Damascus Road, and how it dramatically changed his life, and the life of millions of other people through his ministry.
- Many of you have seen me in this church over the last 12-18 months, but do you really know about my life ? Tonight I want to take you back to 16th June 1969, when in Melbourne I was involved in a traffic accident and my neck was broken. I was paralysed from the neck down and the doctors said I would never walk again.
- For three months I lay in that hospital bed unable to do anything for myself - completely paralysed from the neck down.
- At that time I was not a Christian - in fact I did not even know if God existed. But when you are told that you will never walk again, you will try anything to receive a healing.
- I cried out to God a simple prayer. "God if you are really there - heal me and I will serve you for the rest of my life".
- It was a prayer of desperation - the wrong type of prayer to make - You see, you are not supposed to make deals with God Almighty.
- But God is merciful - God is gracious, God meets you at your level of faith - He meets you at your level of understanding - however small it may be at the time.
- Over the next 6 weeks I started to get feeling back into my fingers, then my arms, my legs and finally my whole body.
- All this time the doctors in the hospital were telling me not to get my hopes up - I was paralysed and I would never walk again. Don't put your hopes in these muscle spasms - they will go away.
- When I got up off that bed in the hospital in September 1969 and started to walk again, the doctors could not say that I was paralysed any longer. God Almighty had heard my prayer, and through the blood of Jesus Christ my old life was made new.
- The Scripture says that by His stripes we are healed. I know this to be a fact in my life. The Healing power of God worked a miracle in my own life and I have been preaching in over 40 countries around the world to proclaim that God's Word is true.

But let us go back to the Word and see why miracles should happen today .

In Joel chapter 2 God confirms His presence to the nation of Israel and He promises to replace all the goods which have been taken from the nation.

- In Joel 2:27 God says : *"And you shall know that I am in the midst of Israel and the I, the Lord, am your God, and there is no-one else. My people shall never be put to shame."*
- Then there is a time change in the Scriptures in verse 2:28. which we need to see and understand.

In Joel 2:28-32 God says : *"And afterwards I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions.*
Even upon my menservants and my maidservants in those days will I pour out My Spirit. And I will show signs and wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke."

- And after what special event will this occur ?
- Peter under the anointing and power of the Holy Spirit recognised that the prophesy was coming into effect and He was able to relate this back to the events which had occurred in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- Will it be restricted to Jews only ? No. - the Word tells us that this tremendous gift will become available to ALL FLESH !!!
- The Scripture goes on to tells us that young men shall see visions.
- I like this part of the Scripture because here God is giving the power to see the future to the next generation of believers in the community. God will give the power of visions to the young men.
- Through the last 10 years the Holy Spirit has been slowly moving across the Asian nations, commencing first in Singapore, then Malaysia, through Thailand then splitting and going north-west towards Burma and Laos, and North-east towards Vietnam, Cambodia and China.
- Wherever the Holy Spirit goes there are signs and miracles which follow, because that is the confirmation that God is working in the midst of His people.
- In the last chapter of The Gospel of Mark Jesus gives His instructions to the disciples and it is recorded this way :-

Mark 16:14-20 says : *"Afterwards He appeared to the eleven [apostles themselves] as they were reclining at table; and He reproved them and He reproached them for their unbelief (their lack of faith) and their hardness of heart, because they had refused to believe those who had seen Him and looked at Him attentively after He was risen from the dead.*

And He said to them, Go into all the world and preach and publish openly the good news (the gospel) to every creature.

He who believes - that is who adheres to and trusts in and relies upon the Gospel and Him whom it sets forth - and is baptised will be saved from the penalty of eternal death; but he who does not believe - who does not adhere to and trust in and rely upon the gospel and Him whom it sets forth - will be condemned.

And these attesting signs will accompany those who believe : in My name they will drive out demons: they will speak with new languages.

They will pick up serpents, and even if the drink anything deadly; it will not harm them; they will lay their hands on the sick and they will get well.

So then the Lord Jesus, after He had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and He sat down at the right hand of God.

And they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord kept working with them and confirming the message by the attesting signs and miracles that closely accompanied it (the Word of God).

- We know that Peter was able to perform miracles in the name of Jesus Christ, so were many other of the disciples - but what about today ?

- The Word says that God will confirm His word with attesting signs and miracles. We have to be ready to receive God's Word and be ready and expectant to see His miracles being worked in this day and age.
- In April of 1987 a group of about 20 people from Thailand went to Singapore to the 6th Asian Convention of the Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship. There were about 1000 delegates who came from many nations around the world to hear what the guest speakers had to say.
- The speakers were Derek Prince and Ruth Prince from the USA, Joe Popell from Taiwan and many others.
- Derek Prince is a man who has spent the last 70 years preaching about Jesus Christ. He started out as a person who did not believe in Christ - but God changed all that. He now preaches in many different Chinese dialects into mainland China for several hours each day and his set of teaching notes called the foundation series are used in many bible colleges and theological seminaries around the world in different languages.
- Joe Popell was called by God to go to Taiwan and start up a church there. He did not know how or why, but he was obedient to the call of God on His life. When He came to this convention he told us that the church he started had more than 10,000 members and was growing daily.
- Joe was asked to pray for healing for a man who was deaf and dumb since birth. He did not refuse - he just told everybody that God was the one who performed miracles and all we had to do was ask Him to do them.
- First he put his 2 little fingers into the deaf man's ears and prayed for the Lord to remove the spirit of deafness which was on the person. He then took a watch out of his pocket and held it about 3 feet from the side of the man's head. and through a person doing sign language asked if he could hear anything ?
- The response He nodded his head: HALLELUJAH! He then put the watch on the other side and again asked if he could hear anything ? Again he nodded his head.
- Now this man has never heard or said anything since birth and so through the sign language he was told that we would teach him his first word and so slowly the syllables came : HA - LE - LUL - JAH .
- When that man said hallelujah, the whole place, with more than 1,000 people erupted into clapping, shouting and praising God.
- The news spread through Singapore like fire.
- The next evening a whole family came - they were deaf and dumb since birth. The father through sign language told Joe Popell, that His wife and himself were old - but would he please pray for his children to receive their speech and their hearing.
- One by one the children received their hearing and their speech. At the end Joe Popell called up the husband and wife who were in tears and asked them if they would like to receive healing as well.
- That night a whole family was miraculously healed from deafness and dumbness. God confirms His Word with signs and wonders.
- Later in 1987 we met Nora Lamb, a Chinese Christian who refused to denounce Jesus Christ and join the Chinese Communist party.
- She was sentenced to death by firing squad. Three times they took aim and fired and three times God intervened in a miraculous way, and stopped the bullets from hitting

her. This so perplexed the captain of the guard that he asked her "Why do I see a bright light come down from above between me and you when I give the order for the soldiers to fire" ?

- She was able to explain that God had intervened and that she was not to die at the hands of the Chinese Communists. She was later exiled out of China. She now has a strong evangelical ministry to Chinese people throughout the world.
- Throughout my time of missionary work, in many countries over the last 18 years, God has provided for us. We have been in a faith mission situation trusting God for a job, a place to stay- everything.
- He provides the income to allow us to prepare Christian books, Christian teaching tapes, videos and the money for fares and transport costs, to allows us to spread His word through many nations.
- Rani and I have had the privilege to see more than 15,000 people make a commitment to Jesus Christ in the 15 years we have been married.
- We have also seen how these people have gone on with their Christian walk - getting married and bringing up their children in the knowledge and discipline of our Lord.
- I believe that this church - The Bethel Christian Centre, has a special place in God's heart, and that He wants the people of this church to be expecting miracles to happen amongst us on a daily basis.
- As God provides for the younger generation to see visions, I feel that God wants to encourage each and every one, of you to draw closer to Him - so that He can impart to you His vision for your life and the lives of others.
- He wants you to have the very best in life - without fear, persecution, or abuse.
- God is able to perform miracles in the hearts of people today - just like He did at the time when Jesus walked the earth, or after Pentecost when the apostles went throughout the lands spreading God's Word.
- Today you have an opportunity to plug into God.
- Today you have an opportunity to ask God what He wants you to do with your life.
- This is the hour when God can change the rest of your life. Are you going to let it pass you by ???
- Let us pray !!!

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CHAPTER 17: MISSED OPPORTUNITIES

There are many places in the Bible where people have missed opportunities to bring glory and honour to God Almighty, by not acting as they should, or by not being obedient to what God has told them to do, through their prophets, or the Holy Spirit.

Today, I want to look at some of these situations, and see if we can learn from them, so that we do not miss opportunities in the future.

MOSES

When Moses led the people into the wilderness, they were a group of slaves coming out of Egypt, where they were told by their masters what they to do.

In most cases, they did not have the training to think for themselves. Because of this upbringing, while they were in the wilderness, they complained a lot.

They did not have any meat to eat & that they did not have any water to drink, so Moses went to God and asked how to deal with this problem. [Exodus 15:22-16:36]

Notice that Moses did not try to solve this problem himself! He went to His Boss; The Lord God Almighty, for his answer.

The Lord told Moses that tomorrow they would have all the meat they could eat; in fact, they would get sick, because they would eat too much of it.

When they had no water, God told Moses **the first time,** to strike the rock with his staff, [Exodus 17:1-7] and water came out of it.

The **Second Time** they had no water, God told Moses to "speak to the rock and water shall come forth from it." But Moses was so angry with the people, that **he struck the rock twice with his staff, instead of speaking to it.** [Numbers 20:11]

Yes, water did come out of the rock, but because of the disobedience of Moses, in not obeying God's instructions exactly as instructed, he was denied entering the Promised Land [Deuteronomy 3:23 – 7:11] ~ **a Missed Opportunity because of Disobedience.**

ELIJAH & ELISHA

Elijah was God's faithful servant, until he allowed the fear of Jezebel, to take away his faith, and he fled into the mountains. [The scripture tells us that "Faith" casts out "Fear" ~ but "fear" can destroy your "faith", if you allow it to take a hold in your life].

God Almighty told Elijah to go and find Elisha and throw your shawl over him, to be your successor. Elijah obeyed the Lord, threw his shawl over Elisha, and kept walking.

It was now up to Elisha to decide, if he would take this opportunity or not, to become Elijah's servant and apprentice.

Elisha left his home and followed Elijah and was his apprentice for 14 years, until God Almighty saw that he was ready to take Elijah's place, as the Prophet to Israel. Even here, Elisha had to wait for God's timing ~ not his own. [We must learn not to "run ahead of God", because that always ends up as a disaster.]

THE SCHOOL OF PROPHETS

In the 9th century B.C., when it was time for Elijah to be taken up into Heaven, God Almighty set-in motion, a series of events described in the Book of Kings, chapter 2, to test Elisha and his loyalty to Elijah.

Elijah was directed to go to several different places, and each time he told Elisha to remain behind, but Elisha refused. He said; "where you go, I will go!"

On two occasions, they came across 2 different school of prophets, and in both cases, these prophets asked Elisha did he know that Elijah was going to be taken up to heaven today? He replied, "yes, his did, and that he was going to be there to witness this special event".

In the second case, the prophets were standing beside the River Jordan, when they asked Elisha this question.

When Elijah took his mantle and struck the river Jordan it parted, so that they could cross the river on dry land. These prophets could have crossed the river with Elisha and witnessed the events which were to follow.

Elijah asked Elisha if he wanted anything, before he left, and Elisha asked for **a double portion of the anointing that was on Elijah**.

Elijah replied, if he sees him being taken up into heaven, then his request will be granted by God Almighty. The Bible records that Elisha saw the chariot of fire coming down from heaven as a whirlwind, and taking up Elijah into heaven, and his shawl falling back to earth.

Elisha then picks up the shawl and rolls it up, and goes and strikes the water of the Jordan River and says: "Where is the Spirit of Elijah?" The Jordan River parts, so that Elisha was able to return to the other side of the Jordan. The school of Prophets discerned that the spirit of Elijah had now fallen on Elisha.

Here was a missed opportunity for all-of these prophets. They knew that Elijah was going to be taken up to heaven that day, and they could have crossed over the river with Elijah & Elisha, and received a blessing from the Lord, but they remained behind and missed out.

THE 12 DISCIPLES IN THE BOAT

The disciples were in the boat, and they see a figure coming towards them, which they first think is a ghost, and they are afraid.

This episode is covered in Matthew 14:22-33, in Mark 6:45-52, and in John 6:16-21. However, the account of "Peter walking on the water" is not included in Luke, and John.

Matthew was among the 12 disciples of Jesus, and he got the first-hand information that he had seen Peter walking on water.

Jesus told them not to be afraid, that it was in fact Jesus Himself, and He told THEM ALL to come to Him, to walk on the water ~ but alas, only Peter had 100% faith and he stepped out of the boat and went towards Jesus, walking on the water.

Here was a **Missed Opportunity for the other 11 disciples.** ALL of the disciples could have walked on the water, but they did not have enough faith to step out onto the water and be blessed.

Jesus has given us all this same invitation, to put our 100% faith in His word, and His Holy Spirit, to do what may seem impossible to our "natural eyes, and our natural minds".

But we must remember that "all things are possible through Christ who strengthens us."

THE 500 WHO SAW JESUS BEFORE PENTECOST

In 1 Corinthians 15:1-11, it says that over 500 people at one time saw Jesus after His resurrection. Over a period of 40 days, up to the day Jesus went back to Heaven, He was seen by, and talked to a number of individuals. Jesus said He would come back the same way He went to Heaven.

In the Book of Acts, chapter 1, Jesus commanded His followers to remain in Jerusalem to "receive the Promise from the Father" ~ the Holy Spirit.

The people gathered in one place, in one accord, and in prayer & supplications, waiting for God to honour the Promise given by Jesus, before His ascension into Heaven.

Ten days later, at Pentecost, the Holy Spirit fell on those that were gathered in the Upper Room, with the Holy Spirit's power given to each one of them, the evidence of this being tongues of fire, hovering over the head of each person present in the Upper Room.

The sad thing is that 500 people saw Jesus alive after the resurrection, but only 120 people were obedient and waited for the Promise to come. There could have been 500 people in that Upper Room, who could have received the Holy Spirit that day, **it was another missed opportunity!**

Sometimes we are told by the Holy Spirit to do something, and like these people, many fail to be obedient, and as a result, **miss the opportunity to receive the blessing.**

THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH

In chapter one of 1 Corinthians, Apostle Paul, reminds that church of their special place, having received all-of the Holy Spirit gifts, given to the Body of Christ, but then he starts getting serious about the problems that have arisen in the church, since he lived there for more than 18 months.

Commencing at verse 10, NLT version: But dear brothers, I beg you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, to stop arguing among yourselves. Let there be real harmony, **so that there won't be splits in the church** (The Body of Christ). **I plead with you to be of ONE MIND, UNITED in THOUGHT and PURPOSE.**

For some of those who live at Chloe's house have told me of your arguments and quarrels, dear brothers.

Some of you are saying; "I am a follower of Paul"; and others say that "they are followers of Apollos", or "followers of Peter"; and others state that "they are the only true followers of Christ". [So, just 25 years after the ascension of Jesus Christ, there were already 4 different denominations, people following people, and not following Jesus Christ.]

In doing this, you have broken Jesus Christ, into many pieces!

Paul then issues them with a challenge: But did I, Paul, die for your sins? [Did Apollos die for your sins? Did Peter die for your sins? The answer of course is NO!]

Were any of you baptised in the name of Paul? NO! You were baptised into the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit!

Paul goes on to say that he was not sent primarily to baptise people, but to preach the gospel of truth ~ the good news.

Verse 18: I know very well how foolish it sounds to those who are lost, when they hear that Jesus Christ died to save them. But we who are saved recognise this message as the very power of God. For God says, "I will destroy all human plans of salvation, no matter how wise they seem to be, and ignore the best ideas of men, even the most brilliant of them.

Verse 21: For God in his wisdom saw to it that the world would never find God through human brilliance, and then He stepped in and saved all those who believed His message, which the world calls foolish and silly.

The Church in Corinth had already started to lose its power because of division (splits) within the Body of Christ.

In the Book of Revelation, written some 65 years after the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ, Apostle John is instructed in Chapters 2 & 3, to write about the problems in another 7 cities, that is another 7 churches.

Only 2 of these churches were acceptable to Jesus in their present state. Five of these churches had to be fixed, or be rejected.

Sadly, the church in the world today, (in this 21st Century) has not learnt any lessons from these mistakes. We now have people following Calvin, Luther, the Pope, and the Wesley Brothers, and others saying that **"THEY ARE THE ONLY TRUE CHURCH"!**

Nothing has changed! The church has lost its power, because of a **Missed Opportunity**, ***to become united***, ***to have one Purpose,*** which is to follow Jesus, and to defeat the enemy, through the power of His Holy Spirit.

When Jesus looks down on a city, He only sees ONE church in the city. It may meet in many different places, and at different times, but Jesus only sees HIS CHURCH, the one He died for!

The churches in each city **MUST BE UNITED IN PURPOSE, OF ONE MIND, AND OF ONE ACCORD**! That is the only way to be able to activate all-of the Holy Spirit's power in a city against the enemy.

THE COVID LOCKDOWN

The COVID pandemic caused a lot of churches to re-examine their church operations, and re-evaluate the way they relate to their congregations. No longer can their congregations come to the church to have meetings, because of lockdowns, or social distancing requirements, or government regulations which have closed the churches, but still allows sporting stadiums to remain open.

They must develop new methods to communicate with their congregations and to respond to their needs, especially as people contract the disease, and are at risk of losing their lives. Where people have access to smartphones, or computers, there were media platforms developed, so that whole congregations could still take part in a meeting, even though they were separated by distance, time, and space. ZOOM meetings became very popular, as well as video calls and MSN video calls.

THE COLLECTIVE CHURCH IN YOUR CITY

As I have already stated, when Jesus looks down for Heaven, He sees just ONE church in the city. He said: "He is the **VINE** and we are **THE BRANCHES**". These branches can either bear good fruit, bad fruit, or no fruit. When a branch bears no fruit, it is cut off, and left to dry out, before being burnt in the fire.

In many cities around the world there are many dry churches, bearing no fruit, and sooner or later God Almighty will burn that church, by removing the lampstand from within its congregation.

If it continues to operate, it will become an apostate church, "having a form of godliness, but being ungodly". It brings no people to salvation or repentance, because they no longer teach about sin. They may have many "activities" but as per John 15:16, their fruit does not remain, or glorify Jesus.

Jesus is looking for cities, where the pastors meet and pray for each other, that are not afraid to have combined service activities of Praise and Worship, where a visiting speaker

is welcome in mass meetings of all the congregation members; because the pastors and church leaders have the revelation that they are different parts of the same Body of Christ; just like we have different part of our bodies, doing different functions; but all working for the common goods of our Body.

In this case, we are working together as **"the combined Body of Jesus Christ, His hands, and His feet here on the earth, with Jesus Christ being the Head of the Body.**

As we now enter the "Beginning of the end of the Age of the Gentiles", no longer will the Lord tolerate division in His Body.

A part-time skeleton church (a church without any skin, or flesh, on its spiritual bones) has no chance of defeating a full-time Satan. The church must be united, in each city, to keep out the evil one.

Remember, the church is not fighting against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers in high places. Remember, in a world war, one man cannot win a war against 1 million opponents. Only the power of Jesus can do that! Where there is UNITY, GOD COMMANDS A BLESSING!! That is the lesson to be learnt for the 21st century church!

LOVE YOUR ENEMIES.

Jesus commanded His followers to "love your enemies"! In marrying into the India/Pakistan culture, with my father-in-law being born in India, and serving in the Indian Regiment of the British Army during WWII, and my wife being born in Pakistan (after Partition) I must deal with both sides of the hatred, which exists between these two nations.

For nearly 1900 years Christianity has been involved in these two nations, from the time that "Doubting Thomas" came to the Indian subcontinent and spread the good news of Jesus Christ, before being martyred.

Then the British came and Christianity was revived once again, with schools and religious education. But the churches, were suspicious of each other, when in fact they should have been working together.

Now is the time for change! Neither country will have peace in this region, unless the combined churches, on both sides of their common border, start to wake up and start being obedient to the word of God, and fulfilling the great commission of Matthew 28:18-20, where Jesus commanded his followers to GO (an action word) and "MAKE DISCIPLES". There is no scripture which tells God's followers to GO and Make DENOMINATIONS!!! Until we start obeying God's word, there can be NO PEACE, nor any blessings for either nation. The challenge is for Indian churches to start praying for blessings to come upon the Pakistan churches, and the Pakistani Leadership. The Pakistani churches must start praying for blessing to come upon the Indian churches and the Indian Leadership. God Almighty will honour and answer both prayers!

This example must be applied to every nation. We are commanded to pray for ALL those in authority over us, both within the church, and with the government sectors, including the emergency services and our military.

If we refuse to obey God's word, then don't expect God to continue to bless us. His word contains promises of Blessings and of Curses ~ which can be the "Removal of His Blessings".

THE ONE CHURCH IN YOUR CITY

The immediate challenges for the 21st century church.

1. All pastors (of all denominations) must regularly meet together, and pray for each other.
2. All pastors must meet with their local government administrations and ensure that they are being prayed for, by the combined churches in their respective cities.
3. From these consultations, find out what projects the combined churches can do to help the local governments better serve their people. [Become the hands of feet of Jesus in YOUR CITY]
4. There must be a group of intercessors established within each city, to pray for all of the pastors, to be the spiritual "watchmen on the walls" for the city.

5. All pastors must be involved in providing dedicated teachers to go into the schools to provide Religious Education to school teachers and students (if allowed by law).
6. Provide funds for school chaplains, if allowed by law, and approved by the school principals. This greatly reduces bullying and pornography in schools.
7. Whenever a state or federal government is considering the passage of a new law which contradicts the laws set out in scripture, then "the WHOLE church" must rise up and tell those in authority it is wrong, and the consequences of passing laws which contradict God's laws.
8. Activate protests against any law which is presently enacted that is contradictory to God's laws, and pressure the government through local representation and prayer, to repeal all such laws.
9. God is coming back for a HOLY CHURCH. I trust your church and your nation will be included in HIS CHURCH.

CHAPTER 18: MOSES ENCOUNTERS JESUS AT THE BURNING BUSH

We are told that the Old Testament is a shadowed picture of what will take place in the New Testament, so it is important that we do not gloss over these stories, because they have a physical and spiritual significance for us, in the Age of the Gentiles ~ Yes, in the New Testament today.

In Exodus chapter 3, Moses encountered the burning bush on the slopes of Mount Horeb, and saw the burning bush, but also observed that the flame was not burning away the leaves of the tree, so he went to investigate this strange sight.

Later in the Old Testament, we see that God makes His presence known to the Hebrews as they wandered in the desert, as a cloud by day and a fire by night. When God's presence was amongst them, it did not burn up the forest, or the animals, or the people that were present in that place on the earth. This clearly shows that God Almighty can control what happens when He appears as a fire, it does not necessarily mean death and/or destruction.

In the New Testament, the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, made His presence known by fire, hovering over the house in Jerusalem, as recorded in Acts chapter 2, and then descending as tongues of fire onto the heads of all of the 120 people who were present in the upper room. They did not get burned up either, but received the Holy Spirit's anointing, power and direction.

As Moses approached the burning bush, He heard a voice coming out of the fire, telling him not to come any closer, and to take off His shoes, because the place where he was standing was holy ground. We know that the voice was in fact Jesus in his spiritual form, and now we have the questions;

Why did Jesus tell Moses to take off His shoes?

I believe that the reason was because there was probably sheep dung on his shoes, and God did not want the evil and impurities of this world, to pollute a holy place ~ remember, ***"the ground upon which you stand is holy"***.

Even today in eastern cultures, they take their shoes off BEFORE they come inside the church, because they believe that "where two or three are gathered, Jesus is there amongst them" and hence the place is "holy".

Sadly, western cultures do not have that same revelation about holiness, or taking scripture literally like this.

Why did Moses hide his face from God?

It also says that Moses fell face down onto the ground, hiding his face.

I believe it was because He had been told by his father-in-law, (Ruel) Jethro, the Priest of Midian, that anyone who saw the face of God would die.

But we now know that this is not the case. God talked face-to-face with Moses many times in the forty years that he was leading the Hebrews in the wilderness, and he did not die ~ but his face glowed from being in the presence of God Almighty.

Moses' staff

Jesus tells Moses that He is going to send him back into Egypt to speak to Pharaoh and tell him to "Let MY people go"!

Moses is unsure that the Hebrews in Egypt will believe that God has really spoken to him, and has sent him back to Egypt to lead His people out of Egypt and into the Promised Land, just like He had promised to their forefathers.

Jesus tells Moses to throw his staff down onto the ground. When he does it turns into a venomous snake and Moses runs from it. Then Jesus tells him to pick it up by the tail. He does and it turns back into a staff once again.

Now I don't know about you, but I don't like snakes, having stepped on one when I was a child, and I was off like a rocket running away from it ~ just like Moses. Now, if I had been told by my father, (or Jesus for that matter) to go and pick up the snake by the tail, I am not sure that I would have obeyed.

This was a test of faith for Moses. He had to look beyond what he saw in the physical realm (a venomous snake) and believe that Jesus was more powerful than the snake, and that in obeying God's commands he would not come to any harm. The snake was a symbol of Satan's power, but it was also the symbol of Pharaoh's power in Egypt. In getting Moses to perform this action, Jesus was showing Moses that God's power was superior to the power of any earthly ruler. When Moses reached down and took the snake by the tail, the power of the snake was reduced to nothing, because it was trapped inside the staff.

The cloak;

The next test was that Jesus told Moses to put his arm inside his cloak and then remove it. When Moses did this, it came out completely covered in Leprosy.

In those times to have leprosy meant complete isolation, to be an outcast, no longer allowed to enter the sanctuary to worship God Almighty, no longer able to work with others, or even go shopping in the local market.

A leper had to shout out his presence, "UNCLEAN", so that others could get out of his way, because there was widespread fear that leprosy was contagious, just by being in the presence of a leper.

Even though Moses had been a Prince of Egypt, leprosy showed that he was an outcast, a person outside of God's immediate presence and attention. There was no eternal hope for him to enter heaven; he was doomed.

Then Jesus tells Moses to put his hand inside the cloak and retrieve it once again, but this time, it came out completely clean.

Here again Jesus is showing Moses that God's power is so great that He can heal all manner of sickness and disease.

This is fact was one of the statements that Jesus claimed, as part of His ministry here on the earth. "I have come to heal ALL manner of sickness and disease, and to heal all those who are oppressed by the evil one." [Now you do not have the be a Bible Scholar, or a Theologian, to know that "ALL" means "ALL"!]

Now with this information clearly directing him back towards Egypt, a messenger comes to tell him that the people in Egypt who wanted to kill him have all died, so he can now go back to Egypt.

Forty years before he had fled Egypt as a Prince of Egypt, accused of murdering an Egyptian slave supervisor, but now Moses was returning as a Hebrew messenger, on an assignment from God Almighty Himself.

When He returns it is to a different Pharaoh, but one who knows of his past.

When Moses proclaims that God Almighty, the maker of the heavens and the earth has sent him with a message for Pharaoh, it is not received with gusto, because Jesus has already told Moses that Pharaoh's heart will be hardened to any news or miracles, and will refuse to "Let MY people go"!

When Moses throws down the rod it turns into a Cobra snake, but this is quickly countered by Pharaoh's magicians, who throw down their rods and they also turn into snakes.

But then the first miracle takes place. The Cobra (the staff of God's servant) starts to eat up all of the other snakes, removing their power, because Pharaoh's magicians don't get their rods back ~~ they have been trapped in "the Rod of God's servant".

Then God tells Moses to pour out water ~ and all the water in Egypt (used by the Egyptians) turns into blood, ~ but the water used by the Hebrews in Goshen remains clear, clean and unaffected.

Throughout history, water is a sign of life and in the Book of Revelation the prophecy states that there will be a war on the earth and Israel shall be covered in blood up to the depth of a horse's shoulder. This war will affect those who follow evil, who have the mark of the beast upon their hands, or their foreheads. But those who are righteous, who have the mark of Jesus Christ within their hearts, shall not be affected, and Jesus has promised that those of His followers who "endure till the end, shall be saved".

In the Book of Revelation, it also says that God will unleash the plagues of Egypt, not just on Egypt this time, but upon the whole world, therefore we need to see what happened to the people of Egypt during these plagues, because this will affect the whole earth.

So, in this day and age, are you ready for the plagues that God is sending upon the earth?

Late last year, and early this year, a vast plague of locusts arose out of the continent of Africa and crossed over into Saudi Arabia and then mysteriously flew over Israel (without landing and causing any destruction) and then landed in Iraq, Iran, Syria, and then into Pakistan and India. The plague followed the exact same conditions of the plague of locusts in Egypt, at the time of Moses, eating everything in sight. It attacked the countries where they worship other gods and "passed over the land of Israel" where they worship God Almighty.

Then late in 2019 and early in 2020, the deadly COVID virus appeared on the scene, killing millions throughout the whole earth. Some say it is another warning about the end times, whilst others say it is just coincidence that it happened now and it has nothing to do with the prophecies of the Book of Revelation.

Well, for 120 years Noah was telling people it was going to rain, and yet nobody believed him either, until the rains came and flooded the whole earth ~ but then IT WAS TOO LATE!

Maybe now is the time for pastors to seriously start teaching out of the Book of Revelation and making the necessary "corrections" to your churches, as defined in Revelation chapters 2 & 3, otherwise YOU WILL BE LEFT BEHIND, because Jesus says what He means & means what He says!

CHAPTER 19: "NEHEMIAH" - THE REBUILDING LEADER

IMPORTANT STEPS TO REBUILDING

1. **INQUIRY**-Nehemiah 1:2
   Nehemiah inquired about the state of Jerusalem. He was interested and concerned about the city.
   LEADERSHIP WORKS BEST WHEN YOU DO WHAT YOU ARE INTERESTED IN, WHAT YOU ARE PASSIONATE ABOUT. Engage in what really touches you, and motivates you.

2. **INFORMATION**
   Because Nehemiah made the inquiry, he received vital information on the state of the city of Jerusalem.
   A LEADER SHOULD BE INFORMED ON THE ISSUES HE IS INTERESTED IN. A leader should be a seeker of knowledge. Leadership is about listening and learning.

3. **INTERCESSION**
   Nehemiah was moved and touched by the sad state of the city. Before he went to any man for help, he prayed to God and interceded for the city. The source and the secret of successful leadership is God; who is the solution to every need and challenge we face.
   SUCCESS AND VICTORY BEGINS ON OUR KNEES AND THEN ITS MANIFESTED ON THE BATTLE GROUND.

4. **INFLUENCE**
After interceding, the king was moved to help in the building. Nehemiah was given favour, security, and provisions, for the rebuilding of the city. GOD GIVES THE LEADER INFLUENCE SO THAT HE CAN FULFILL HIS PURPOSE.
Hudson Taylor the great missionary to China said: GOD'S WORK DONE IN GOD'S WAY, WILL NEVER LACK GOD'S PROVISION. God can and will give you influence for His glory.

5. **INCUBATION TIME**
When Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem, he did not share his vision of rebuilding the city. First, He did a thorough inspection of the walls silently and at night. He was counting the cost, and preparing his mind, and heart, for the task ahead. IF YOU HAVE A VISION, YOU SHOULD GIVE IT TIME TO GROW. GIVE THE VISION TIME TO BE GROUNDED AND ROOTED INTO YOUR SPIRIT.
You need time to feel the vision, to bond to that dream, to let that idea expand in you; you need to feel that burden and take TIME TO CONNECT TO THE VISION; until it becomes a part of your life so that when you face the challenges come, you won't be moved or shaken.

6. **INTIMIDATION**
If your project was initiated by God then expect opposition. The enemy will not just sit down and watch you as you complete the task. You will fight battles; you will be ridiculed and rejected. The enemy will cause you to fear, so that he can paralyse the project. Nehemiah was opposed, falsely accused, and intimidated by the enemies of Israel.
OPPOSITION IS A SIGN THAT YOU ARE SUCCEEDING, IT MEANS YOU MAKING AN IMPACT.
So, rejoice when men persecute you; it means you are impacting against the enemy. Nehemiah ignored the enemies, prayed to God and encouraged the people. DON'T GIVE THE ENEMY ATTENTION, FOCUS ON THE FINISHING LINE.
The wall was complete in a record time of 52 days, because a leader was willing to rise up and shine, give up his comforts, risk his future, sacrifice his life, and fight all odds. IF WE FOLLOW THIS EXAMPLE, WE CAN MAKE A MARK IN OUR GENERATION, WE CAN REBUILD AND REMAKE THIS CITY, THIS STATE, AND THIS WORLD, GIVING GLORY TO JESUS CHRIST AT ALL TIMES.

CHAPTER 20: OBEY GOD'S WORD ~ OR "CATCH THE VISION"?

I have heard many sermons in the last 25 years saying that we must "catch the vision" of the Denomination, or the Pastor, or of the "Prophecy", for the Year ahead, BUT VERY FEW sermons about **"Obeying God's Word".**

John the Baptist came as one crying in the wilderness: **"prepare for the coming of the Lord".**

John the Baptist baptised into repentance, because he got a revelation from the Word of God, that each and every person were accountable to God the Father (the righteous judge) for their own individual sins.

Because of our individual sins, we were outside the Covenant with God and therefore, could not enter into an eternal relationship with him.
Now some will jump up and down and say; "but that is under the Old Testament Covenant, this does not apply to us, we are saved by the blood of Jesus Christ"; and you would be true ~~ up to a point!
Your past sins, that is, before you accepted Jesus Christ as your Saviour are forgiven you, but then you are required to follow New Testament Scripture!
Jesus said: "If you love me ~~ you will keep my commandments."
Now Jesus did not say "you will keep **SOME** of my commandments" or "you will keep them **when you feel like it**".
NO! Jesus means what He says and says when He means. You shall keep ALL of my commandments, ALL OF THE TIME!

Matthew 28:18-20 is a pretty clear instruction, spoken by Jesus Himself to His Church leaders (His Disciples) before He ascended into Heaven.

"GO" (an action word) and "MAKE" (another action word) DISCIPLES!
You notice that Jesus did not give you a choice!
Jesus did not say "wait until you "catch the vision"!
Jesus did not even say to Go and make "Believers".
This instruction from Jesus was very specific, and each of those disciples present, were to be held individually accountable for their obedience to this command from Jesus Christ.
If they did not obey this command there was to be consequences!
This was later confirmed in Acts 1:8 where Jesus again made it very clear. Here Jesus even laid out the **"action plan"** about **"how to"** implement this evangelistic command.
You shall wait in Jerusalem until you receive the Promise from the Father (the Holy Spirit) and then, you shall go and obey my commandments.
The first place to evangelise will be where you are; right here in **YOUR Jerusalem** (in your town or city) or wherever you are presently fellowshipping with Jesus.
The next place is the surrounding villages, towns and cities.
Then move out to the next Province.
Then the rest of **YOUR country**. After you have completed these steps, you are ready to finally move **to another country**.
In the Old Testament, God separated Israel as the example nation, for the world to see what happens when a nation obeys God's word ~~ they are blessed and peace reigns upon their nation.
It also shows what happens when a nation disobeys God's word ~~ there are droughts, floods, earthquakes, famine, diseases, wars, and even captivity befalls the nation.
But in The New Testament, God also showed what happens to Christians when they obey God's word, or disobey God's word. **The pattern of God has not changed!**
Philip, the Evangelist, got the message, that God held every Christian accountable to His word. **Each Christian is "called to be an evangelist"** wherever he/she works, or interacts with people.
So, Philip went out and preached the gospel that the Messiah has come ~~ Jesus was his name, and many believed, and signs and wonders followed him in his ministry.
It even got the attention of "the Church in Jerusalem" and they sent out Barnabas to investigate, and he reported back to the church what he had seen and heard.
But let us see what happened to the Church in Jerusalem, when they did not obey God's word.

About seven years after Jesus ascended, and the church in Antioch has been already established, the church in Jerusalem became **"very comfortable"!**
They did not preach in the streets of Jerusalem (even though the word of God tells us to "go into all the streets and lanes" and bring people to Jesus.) So, God had to act, to cause His Divine plans to be implemented.
Steven was captured and stoned to death!
Persecution reigned down upon the church in Jerusalem, because of their disobedience to God's word. Saul started arresting "followers of Jesus" and having them imprisoned and even killed.
In fear of their lives, the Christians in Jerusalem fled out of the city, to Judea, Samaria, and to other countries for their own safety. This is confirmed in **Acts 8:1.**
Interesting ~~~ in Acts 1:8 God says Go and preach! They refused, so in Acts 8:1 God causes them to go to the very places that they were supposed to go in the first place! If they had been obedient, many lives would not have been lost!
General Booth followed this pattern spoken of in Acts 1:8 and evangelised in the villages, towns & cities in Britain, and then he sent the first overseas team to the Indian Capital (at that time it was Lahore, which is now in Pakistan), then "to the ends of the earth" ~~ Australia).
Because General Booth, and his congregation members obeyed God's word, the Salvation Army was blessed "and the Holy Spirit added to the church daily" those called to follow Jesus Christ.
Now do you think you will escape the wrath and anger of God if you refuse to follow His commandments?

Some will say; "Oh but God's mercy endures forever, no worries, she'll be right mate." It was not alright for the Jews in Jerusalem. It was not alright for the people in many nations over the last 2,000 years. There were people who refused to obey God's word, and then refused to listen to the warnings of "the modern-day prophets", who got their revelations from the Lord, exactly the same way as the Prophets of the Old Testament, through dreams, visions, from angelic beings, and the audible voice of the Lord Himself.

In John chapter 4, Jesus said to the woman at the well, "that the time is coming **"and now is",** (2,000 years ago) when those who worship Jesus Christ, must worship Him in Spirit and in Truth."

You cannot worship Jesus Christ "in Spirit and in Truth", if you are: Not obeying his word, by going out of the church building, and witnessing to people in the streets and lanes, and leading people to Jesus. This is because you have the **"spirit of rebellion"** in you, **not the Spirit of God!**

You cannot worship Jesus in Truth if you are refusing to **"obey His commandments"**, because you have the **"spirit of lies"** in you.

You are fulfilling an end time prophecy, because you will **"have a form of Godliness", but no fruits of salvation!**

In the Book of Revelation, Jesus was very specific in what He dictated to Apostle John to write down, so that "the Angel of each church" could relay that information to the Body of Christ.

Those who have seriously studied the 7 church types in the Book of Revelation will know that only two church types are acceptable "in their present format" before the Father, to be acceptable as the Bride of Christ.

The other 5 church types have to have serious "makeovers" to be acceptable as a part of the Bride of Christ.

This means that according to Jesus (not me) 71% of all Christians alive today are not acceptable to Him in their present spiritual forms. Major spiritual makeovers are necessary.

That is why Jesus told Apostle Paul to give details of how that correction can be achieved, by using the **"Special Gifts"** that Jesus has given to the Church (Ephesians chapter 4), so that THE WHOLE BODY OF CHRIST CAN BE IN UNITY AND ADVANCE TO A HIGHER LEVEL OF SPIRITUAL MATURITY.

Now I am telling you all this because I see the problem and the scripture says that if I do not speak up about it, then Jesus will hold me accountable for the blood of these people who have fallen away (who have backslidden) and turned their backs on Jesus, through the "spirit of rebellion."

But Jesus also says that if I tell you and you refuse to listen and correct your ways, as defined in Revelations chapters 2 & 3, then the blood of your rebellion is now on your own heads. It is a hard word to deliver, but 2019 is a year of change & we must be prepared to change and come back to the **WHOLE WORD OF GOD, not just the "nice" bits.**

It is time to start out 2019 with a National Day of Repentance, for every Christian Nation on earth, a time of acknowledging our individual and national faults, and to ask the Lord for forgiveness.

If we come before Him in humbleness, to seek His face, in prayer, and promise "to turn from our wicked ways", God has promised that He will hear from Heaven, forgive our sins, and heal our lands.

A good way to start 2019!!!

Be Blessed.

CHAPTER 21: OBEY YOUR GOVERNMENT!

Romans 31:1-4 says: Obey the Government, for God is the one who has put it there. There is no government anywhere that God has not placed in power. So those who refuse to obey the laws of the land, are refusing to obey God, and punishment will follow. For the policeman does not frighten people who are doing right; but those doing evil will always fear him. So, if you don't want to be afraid, keep the laws and you will get along well. The policeman is sent by God to help you.

Many people may be surprised to read this and realise that it is in the Bible and it is a commandment from God, that you "obey" your government, because if you do not, then

you are in direct rebellion against God, and rebellion against God is a sin. Therefore, let us unpack these scriptures:

So, God put your government in place. Whether you voted for it or not, God put it in place. Apostle Paul reinforces this statement by stating **"there is NO government anywhere that God has not "allowed" to be placed into power".**

Many people would look at some governments who terrorise their people and wonder why **God would allow such a government to be in power?** The answer is simple and is answered in the verses above as well. If you refuse to obey the government in power – **"then punishment will follow."**

I look at the ranting that has gone on in the USA since the last Presidential election and reflect on this scripture. Is this part of scripture being preached from pulpits in the USA? Do Christians in the USA realise that "punishment will follow" all those who refuse to obey the government, which has been "allowed" by God, to be in place in your nation? If you refuse to obey your government, then you are rebelling against God and His word. Those consequences should be a wake-up call for every pastor, in every church, in the USA.

This same warning goes out to the churches in Australia as well. The recent plebiscite resulted in a 60% vote for Same Sex Unions. It cannot be called "marriage" Because God's word defines what Marriage is; *"Marriage is a holy estate, ordained by God, between a man and a woman".*

Our Australian Parliament, (which God has allowed to be in place) is to introduce laws which will be in direct contradiction to God's laws. This means that if our government actually passes these laws, then "punishment will follow", NOT ONLY THE GOVERNMENT, but the people they represent.

But the hardest test for Australian Christians will be to "obey the government" which the Lord God Almighty has placed over us, because "obedience is better than sacrifice." In that obedience will be blessings, protection and grace, from the punishment which is to follow.

1. Yes, God has allowed this government to be elected.
2. God has allowed this plebiscite to take place,
3. But God's word must ALWAYS BE OBEYED!
4. There are always consequences when it is not!

If we go back and look at the nations in the Old Testament, God promised blessings for each nation that "obeyed" His word, and "curses" for those nations who did not.

So, we as nations have reached that tipping point. Do we follow God's word and received the promised blessings from God, or do we turn our backs on God, disobey His word and subsequently receive His curses?

In contemplating the decision of the Australian Prime Minister, to suspend parliament for one week; maybe it is the needed pause, to reflect on the consequences of enacting this S.S.M Bill.

Does our Prime Minister really want to lead this nation into the curses of God? That is the choice he now has to make ~ and if he makes a decision, which is contrary to God's word, then the whole nation suffers ~ both the righteous and the unrighteous.

CHAPTER 22: PRACTICAL CHRISTIANITY

When Jesus walked the earth, He showed His disciples how Christianity should work, by teaching practical methods of relating to people in need.

He did not take them aside and spend hours on Hermeneutics, or on the detailed analysis of the derivative of this Hebrew or Greek word. Why? Because all of His disciples already were fluent in Hebrew. and had a working knowledge of Greek, because it was the language of the market place, of the trader.

Jesus told Peter to follow Him and he would make him a "fisher of men".

Peter already knew that to be a good fisherman you must be able to make and repair nets, know the correct times to fish, where to fish and what baits to use.

Jesus used practical methods to teach the disciples the same things about people.

For example, if you were now in Pakistan amongst the survivors of the Earthquake, would you be speaking to them about their sins and that God was punishing them, for their disobedience, or would you be there offering practical help, comfort and understanding?

Jesus through His teachings showed that the power of the Holy Spirit, which was at creation, was alive and working in all who put their trust in God.

When Jesus blew the Holy Spirit upon His disciples and sent them out 2 by 2 into the highways and byways, they performed miracles which they marvelled about when they returned to Him weeks later.

Here in this city today we need people who are ready to teach others the practical methods of discipleship and how to become effective workers for Christ.

Likewise in this radio station, we need people who are willing to teach others the practicalities of running a station.

- How to schedule the programs
- How to insert adds
- How to write scripts
- How to make adds
- How to become an announcer, so that in emergencies there will be people available to do live broadcasts, to give directions to the listeners in emergency situations, like evacuations for bushfires, etc.
- People who are able to detect minor faults and repair them.

Likewise, we need people who are ready to give of their time to teach, train and encourage those volunteers, who are ready to step up for God, and do their part in this ministry.

Which one are you, and are you ready for the call?

CHAPTER 23: PRAYER CHANGES THINGS ~ NO PRAYER NO CHANGE!

If we take a concordance and look up this topic, we find the following information:

- **Pray**, is mentioned **301 times** in the Strong's Concordance.
- **Prayed**, is mentioned **75 times** in the Strong's Concordance.
- **Prayer** is mentioned **104 times** in the Strong's Concordance.
- **Prayers**, is mentioned **24 times** in the Strong's Concordance.
- **Prayest**, is mentioned **2 times** in the Strong's Concordance.
- **Prayeth**, is mentioned **7 times** in the Strong's Concordance.
- **Praying** is mentioned **20 times** in the Strong's Concordance.

So, God thinks this topic of prayer, is pretty important, as it is mentioned 533 times in scripture.

If God thinks it is important, (both in the Old Testament and also in the New Testament), then it is something which all Christians, must get to understand clearly.

Why should we pray?

In Matthew chapter 7, commencing at verse 7 we have the following commandment given by Jesus; [NLT]

"Ask and you will be given what you ask for, Seek and your will find. Knock and the door will be opened. For everyone who asks receives. Anyone who seeks, finds. If only you will knock the door will open."

So, let us unpack this scripture a little further;

- How do we ask? We pray.
- How do we seek? We pray and ask for revelation.
- How do we knock on God's Heart? We pray without ceasing until the door is opened unto us.

In this scripture above, Jesus shows us the methods to approach His throne, to pray and to seek His face.

- When we do this, He has promised us that He will answer us, and give us what we ask for.

- When we pray to "seek His face", He has promised us that we will receive what we are seeking ~ His love, His protection, His healing, His comfort.

When we come and make a prayer of confession and repentance, He has promised us that He will forgive our sins, and remember our confessed sins no more. He will set us free from the wages of sin and death.

- Now this does not mean that we can now go and sin, without thinking there will be consequences for our future unconfessed sins ~ NO! We are required to come before the Lord regularly and confess our sins, and ask for forgiveness, so that we continually have a clean heart, and a pure mind before the Lord, so that there are no blockages between us and God.

Pray for those in Authority

The scripture tells us that we are to pray for all those who are placed in authority over us. This applies to all three levels of government, and the judiciary, which are in the "natural world", and all those who are placed in authority over our "spiritual well-being".

The scripture also tells us that God will use a more stringent set of rules to judge those in authority over us, both in the natural as well as in the spiritual world around us.

So today we lift up all those in authority in this city and this nation, and ask the Lord Jesus that they be given wisdom, to administer their roles in an effective and Godly manner, to bring glory unto you, and to you alone.

How should we act and pray?

The scripture is very clear in this matter. Mathew Chapter 6 gives us clear instructions from the mouth of Jesus Himself about this issue.

1. **"TAKE CARE!** Don't do your good deeds publicly, to be admired, for then (if you do this) you will lose the reward from your Father in Heaven."

   Jesus is issuing a warning here, about "How" we do things. We need to take notice of these warnings, if we want to do everything in obedience to His instructions, and hence, glorify His name before His Father in Heaven.
2. "When you give a gift to a beggar, (or to anyone) don't shout about it as the hypocrites do ~ blowing trumpets in the synagogues (or churches) and streets, to call attention to their acts of charity! **I tell you in all earnestness, they have received all the reward they will ever get.**
3. But when you do a kindness to someone, do it secretly ~~ don't even tell your left hand what your right hand is doing.
4. **And your Father, who knows all secrets will reward you.**
   "And now about Prayer". [Jesus thinks this is so important that He takes this issue aside and discusses it separately]. "When you pray, don't be like the hypocrites, who pretend piety by praying publicly on street corners and in the synagogues, (mosques & churches), where everyone can see them. **Truly, that is all the reward they will ever get.**
5. But when you pray, go away by yourself, all alone, and shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father secretly, and your Father, who knows your secrets, will reward you".
6. **(7- 8) Don't recite the same prayer over and over again, as the heathens do, who think prayers are answered only by repeating them again and again.** Remember, your Father knows exactly what you need, even before you ask him!"

In Verse 9, Jesus gives us guidance about "how to pray", that is the "technique" of praying.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

We, as Christians, attribute this prayer to Jesus, but if you examine the text of this **"prayer"** in the Scriptures, you will see that the Disciples asks Jesus to teach them ***(how) "to pray".***

In this case, they would have used the Jewish word **(Halakah) - "how to" ~ in fact they were asking Jesus to show them "the technique of praying"**

"Our Father, which art in Heaven" is the beginning of the **"Lord's Prayer"**, but surprisingly enough, the "Lord's Prayer" is very similar to extracts from pieces of many different Jewish prayers - all of which the disciples (being Jews) would have been familiar with, and able to recite off by heart.

Jesus used the Rabbinical form of teaching, to indicate the process of **"how to" pray**. For example; In the Old & New Testaments there are many references to the Law being given to Moses.

That was all that was needed, for the Jews to know that the person speaking was referring to the 10 Commandments and the 613 Levitical laws.

Even today, we use the same concept when we say: It says in John 3:16 … We assume that the people know this scripture, so we do not explode it any further.

Similarly, when we talk about sin, we say Romans 3:23 and assume that the people listening, know that particular scripture. Let us examine the contents of the Lord's Prayer carefully, and see where it originates.

THE LORD'S PRAYER	Jewish Writings
Our Father, which art in heaven"	"Our Father in Heaven" **(Talmud, Joma. 76a.)**
"Hallowed be the name"	Extolled and hallowed be His great name" **(Kaddish Prayer)**
"Thy Kingdom come"	"His Kingdom come, His salvation spring forth, His Messiah comes". **(Kaddish Prayer)**
"Thy will be done on earth, as it is (already being done) in heaven"	"Do His will as if it were your own". **(Talmud, Sayings of the Fathers 2:4.)**
Give us this day our daily bread"	Rabbi Simon Ben Yochai was asked by his disciples. "Why did the manna not come down from heaven once a year - for the whole year?" He replied:- "This thing may be compared to a king of flesh and blood, who had one son, whom he gave his allowance once a year, so that he would visit his father once a year only. Thereupon he gave him his allowance every day, so that he called on his father every day. The same with Israel. One who had four or five children would worry saying: Perhaps no manna will come down tomorrow, and all will die of hunger. Thus, the Israelites had to turn their attention to their Father in Heaven. (Daily, to ensure that they received His bountiful supply of food). **Talmud. Joma 76a.**
"And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors" **(see also Matt. 5:23-24, Matt. 18:21-35)**	"Raba says: He who does not exercise his right to punish his fellowman, is forgiven all his iniquities." **Talmud Rosh ha-Shana 17a**
"And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil"	"Do not lead me to sin, temptation, and shameful behaviour ... Deliver me from the evil inclination." **(Night Prayer)** "Lord our God, God of our Fathers, be it thy will to deliver us this day and every day

	from ... an evil man, from evil desire, from an evil friend, from an evil neighbour, from ill hap, from the evil eye and from an evil tongue." **(Morning Prayer)**
"For thine is the Kingdom and the power and the glory for ever"	"For thine is the Kingdom and thou shalt reign in glory for ever." **(Morning Prayer)**

So now the challenges come:

1. Do you pray? [Yes/No]
2. Why do you pray? Is it to please God ~ or is it to please man?
3. How do you pray? Do you pray in public, or alone in secret? Do you pray long repetitive prayers, or are they short, to the point, and earnestly from the heart?
4. Who gets the benefit from your prayers?
   You ~ or someone else?
5. Is God pleased with your prayers, when He compares the way you pray, to that laid down in the scriptures?
6. Does God answer your prayers? Is it because of your unbelief, or is it because you have already received your reward?

Finally, God cannot answer prayers which are not prayed ~ even though He knows what we need even before we ask Him.

We have not ~ because we asked not ~ or because we asked amiss.

Selah! Stop! Pause! And think about that!

CHAPTER 24: PREPARING THE WAY

Whenever we read scriptures, we must first remember that everything we read aligns itself to the Hebrew Calendar. Leviticus 23:1-3 says: *Feasts of the LORD*. ***Please note that these are not "Feasts of the Jews" ~ but Feasts of the Lord."***

1 Then the LORD said to Moses, **2** "Speak to the Israelites and say to them, 'These are My appointed feasts, the feasts of the LORD that you are to proclaim as sacred assemblies.

3 For six days work may be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of complete rest, a day of sacred assembly. You must not do any work; wherever you live, it is a Sabbath to the LORD....

Many Christians believe that these are **"Jewish Feasts"**, but that is not the case. The Lord tells Moses that these are **HIS** feasts and all people who follow the Lord, must obey His commandments, and therefore honour **His** feasts.

This is part of God's way of preparing us for His Kingdom.

The **First** of these mandatory feasts is **Passover**, where we remember that the angel of death killed the first-born Egyptians, as a ransom for the first-born of the Jews, so that they belonged to the Lord.

In agricultural terms in Israel, "Passover: is the "beginning of the first harvest" and hence why Jesus is referred to as the "first fruits of the resurrection" – the first fruits of the "spiritual harvest".

The **Second** of these mandatory feasts in Israel is the **Festival of Weeks**, (Shavuot – Pentecost) which is 50 days after Passover and is the "in-gathering of the main harvest" in Israel.

It is also appropriate that the main harvest of the church started at this time, with more than 3,000 souls added to the believers after one sermon from Peter, under the powerful anointing of the Holy Spirit.

The **Final** mandatory feast is the **Feast of Tabernacles**, which is the celebration of the "final harvest in Israel", for that Hebrew calendar year. This is the only feast in Israel where they blow the trumpets instead of the Shofars, which is spiritually significant,

because when Christ appears in the clouds, as per 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18, He will come at the sound of the trumpets.

16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. **17** After that, we who are still alive and are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so, we will be with the Lord forever. **18** Therefore encourage one another with these words.

These words were given by Apostle Paul to the church in Thessalonica to encourage them, and it also applies to us today.

As believers in the Church that Jesus is building, [**not that WE are building**], we are to be prepared for His arrival at the sound of the trumpets, for the **"final ingathering harvest of souls of the Body of Christ"**.

Jesus is preparing us, who are presently betrothed (engaged to Jesus) to get ready for the wedding, at a date that He (the bridegroom's Father) has already determined before the creation of the world.

But there are hurdles that we all must jump over, to be secure in the knowledge that we will be included in the wedding invitation, as the betrothed of Christ, to be part of the group of believers, who will become the Bride of Christ at His wedding.

In Revelation chapters 2 & 3, Jesus tells Apostle John, some 60 years after His ascension, that not all of the church types are acceptable to Him ~~ in their present formats, and **there must be changes! THEIR MUST BE A MAKEOVER!**

Jesus does not leave us to try to work out these changes ourselves. He has already identified the items that must be changed, so that we can be blessed, and guaranteed entry into Heaven.

However, Jesus also identifies the punishments, which will be given to those churches which refuse to change, and align themselves with God's perfect plan.

We have recognised during this COVID event that the church needs to change, to become new wine skins, to receive the new wine of revelation from the Holy Spirit.

God is preparing us for better things, to take us on a journey to higher places in his levels of spiritual understanding. God is preparing the way for us to enter into His Holy of Holies.

Are we ready to take that step of faith? To go where we have never been before? To trust God Almighty completely, with our lives and our futures?

God is preparing the way. He has promised to go before us ~~ but are we prepared to follow? That is the challenge to the church in 2021, 2022, and beyond.

CHAPTER 25: PROVERBS CHAPTER 12

Verse	Description	Comment
If you love learning		
1	If you love learning, you love the discipline that goes with it. How short-sighted to refuse correction?	In every type of academic or sporting event, to learn means to train your mind and your body, so that it performs to its best. This is wise instruction. However it is short-sighted, in fact unwise to refuse, or reject correction, because you will never improve your performance if you do.
2	A good person basks in the delight of God, and he wants nothing to do with devious schemers.	A good person delights in the knowledge of God and wants to follow His ways only, and is not likely to be trapped by devious deceivers with "get-rich" schemes.
3	You can't find firm footing is a swamp,	A swamp is a place of decay and is not firm in its formation, but constantly changing.

	but life rooted in God stands firm	On the other hand, God is the rock upon which we can rely, and know we are always on a firm footing.
4	A hearty wife invigorates her husband, but a frigid wife is cancer in the bones	A wife who is bright and who encourages her husband, is like a crown which can be proudly displayed for all to see, but a wife who is frigid (cold and without complements) is like a cancer which destroys the bones and eventually kills the husband.
5	The thinking of principled people makes for justice; the plots of degenerates corrupt	The people who think righteously exalts a nation; but the thoughts and actions of the wicked are deceitful and lead to corruption.
6	The words of the wicked kill; the speech of the upright saves	Those who are wicked cannot do anything but kill, because that is their nature; but the speech and the actions of the upright (the righteous ones) saves them from destruction.

7	Wicked people fall to pieces – there's nothing to them; the home of good people holds together	History shows that wicked people and nations fall and end up in pieces; but the homes of righteous people stand firm because God is guarding it.
8	A person who talks sense is honoured; airheads are held in contempt	A man is commended because of his righteous behaviour, but a fool who speaks many words without substance (not making any sense) is despised.
9	Better to be ordinary and work for a living that act important and starve in the process	A man is worthy of his hire. Therefore, a person who works well is rewarded, but a fool who pretends to be important will be ignored, not get paid and will face starvation.
10	Good people are good to their animals; the "good hearted" bad people kick and abuse them	A good person cares for his livestock and will make sacrifices for their welfare, but a wicked person will mistreat and abuse his animals and will be rewarded with hardship.
11	The one who stays on the job has food on the table; the witless chase whims and fancies	God blesses and rewards those who are faithful to their employers, but those who keep changing jobs are shifty and unreliable and have little to show for their life, because they chase after dreams which do not come to anything.
12	What the wicked construct finally falls into ruin; while the roots of the righteous give life, and more life	History shows that what wicked evil men construct eventually is captured, overpowered and destroyed, but the root of the righteous bring forth much fruit and multiplication of fruit though the generations.
Wise People take Advice		
13	The gossip of bad people gets them into trouble; but the conversation of good people keeps them out of trouble.	**Your destiny is in the power of your tongue.** If you speak gossip about people God considers you to be ungodly and this gets you into trouble, but if you guard your mouth (and be careful what you say) you will find that you will be protected from troubles.
14	Well-spoken words bring satisfaction; well done work has its own rewards	A well-spoken wise man has satisfaction with himself and with others around him. His work is rewarded because it is good and he is respected among his peers.
15	Fools are headstrong and do whatever they like; but wise people take advice.	Fools rush in where angels fear to tread and as a result get into serious trouble, but wise people listen to advice given to them, weigh it up and if it is sound advice, they will implement it.
16	Fools have short fuses and explode too quickly; the prudent quietly shrugs off insults	Fools react to situations without thinking things through, but a prudent (wise) man will shrug off insults and continue to serve God without and angry responses.
17	Truthful witness by a good person clears the air; but liars lay down a smoke screen of deceit.	A truthful person is believed and tension in a situation is removed; but the wicked lay down a smoke screen of half-truths and deceit, to cause more harm, or to get their way and/or advantage. They shall eventually be rewarded with destruction.

18	Rash language cuts and maims; but there is healing in the words of the wise	Gossip is rash language; and it cuts to the core of people's emotions and hurts them for ever, but the wise person only offers encouraging words which act like healing balm
19	Truth lasts; but lies are here today and gone tomorrow	Jesus said I AM the truth, and His word is unchanging – it lasts forever, but lies are exposed and end up on the garbage heap with no value.
20	Evil scheming distorts the schemer; peace-planning brings joy to the planner	If you plan an evil scheme it will distort your view on things and you will become more evil yourself, but planning for peace brings joy in abundance to the planner.
21	No evil can overwhelm a good person; but the wicked have their hands full of it	Evil cannot overwhelm a good person because his protection is from the Lord; but wicked people have their hands full of evil and they are already overcome by it (even if they don't know it yet).
22	God cannot stomach liars' He loves the company of those who keep their word	Honesty is the best policy, because God loves to be in their presence, but God hates liars and removes His presence from them.
23	Prudent people don't flaunt their knowledge; talkative fools broadcast their silliness.	A fool is easily discovered because he talks without knowledge on any subject; but a wise man conceals his knowledge unless he is asked for it.
24	The diligent find freedom in their work; the lazy are oppressed by work	Diligent people love to work and they use all their knowledge and skills to do the best job they can, but the lazy person complains about his work and is never satisfied with what he achieves.
25	Worry weighs us down; but a cheerful word picks us up.	Worry is a disease straight from Satan and it only brings sickness and grief; but the cheerful words of a righteous man doeth good like a medicine.
26	A good person survives misfortunes; but a wicked life invites disaster	A good person is able to recover quickly when misfortune comes because his faith is in God and His blessings, but the wicked man is already in sin, and it is multiplied upon his head by many disasters.
27	A lazy life is an empty life; but "early to rise" gets the job done	A lazy person has nothing to show for his labours, but a righteous man gets up early, works all day and it able to show the rewards of his labours for many years to come.
28	Good men and women travel right in life; but sin detours take you straight to hell.	Good men and women who follow after righteousness are not trapped by sin and live a good life; but people who fall into sin and do not repent of their sins take the road straight to hell.

CHAPTER 26: PROVERBS CHAPTER 13

Verse	Scripture	Comment
1	A wise youth accepts his father's rebuke; a young mocker does not.	We are required to accept the rebukes of our Father in heaven, because they are to correct us and lead us back onto the right path. All those who refuse to do so are like children who mock at authority, which ultimately leads to destruction.

2	The good man wins his case by careful argument; the evil-minded person only wants to fight	It does not matter how truthful a good man is, the evil man will never accept the truth. His main aim is to fight and win.
3	Self-control means controlling tongue! A quick retort can ruin everything.	We have to learn to "respond" to statements – not "react" to them. To respond means to control our tongue, think through the issue clearly, and then lay out your facts/arguments in a logical and well controlled emotional manner.
4	Lazy people want much but get little, while the diligent people are prospering.	Lazy people want to sit back and receive large benefits, low rental housing and reduced charges for transport, medication and other services, whilst an honest, diligent worker prospers from his labours and is rewarded with respect in the community.
5	A good man hates lies; wicked men lie constantly and come to shame.	Lying is a sin and therefore good men hate lies and liars, because of their sins. Wicked men have lost their self-consciousness to sin and lie constantly, without any shame, nor consideration of their eternal destiny.
6	A man's goodness helps him all through life, while wicked men are being destroyed by their wickedness	A good man is helped through his life because God is with him, but a wicked man is destroyed because Satan is with him.
7	Some rich people are poor, and some poor people have great wealth.	Some rich people are "earthly rich" but morally poor, whilst some poor people are "earthly poor" but morally rich. God does not look at our earthly treasures, but He searches out the hearts of all men.
8	Being kidnapped and held for ransom never worries the poor man	Why would a poor man not worry? He knows that nobody will pay money for him. For him to be dead is maybe better than being poor, because he will be with his Father in heaven.
9	The good man's life is full of light. The sinner's road is dark and gloomy.	A good man has the light of Christ shining upon him and living within him, whilst a sinner's life is covered by Satan's darkness.
10	Pride leads to arguments; be humble, take advice and become wise!	Pride comes before a fall. There is never a winner in an argument, because it always affects a relationship which has to be repaired. Learn to be humble (not weak) and then you will become wise because God establishes the humble and rises them up for His glory.
11	Wealth from gambling quickly disappears; whilst wealth from hard work grows	A person who wins from gambling never saves the winnings, but tries to make more money by gambling and it eventually all disappears. A hard working man values his money and invests it wisely and sees it growing over time.

12	Hope deferred makes the heart sick; but when dreams come true at last, there is life and joy	When things that you hoped for don't turn out as expected, you worry and your heart feels sick, but when you see the realisation of your hope and dreams come true, (irrespective of how long it has taken) you are filled with new life and your heart is full of joy.
13	Despise God's word and find yourself in trouble. Obey it and succeed.	If you reject God's word, do you still expect God to bless you? NO! It will lead you into trouble because God's protection is removed from you for a time. But if you read God's word and obey it you will be blessed and succeed in all that you do.
14	The advice of a wise man refreshes like water from a mountain spring. Those accepting it become aware of the pitfalls on ahead.	Those who listen and accept the advice of a wise man are made aware of possible dangers ahead and are therefore looking for them, so they don't stumble and fall.
15	A man with good sense is appreciated. A treacherous man must walk a rocky road.	The man who gives wise counsel is appreciated and those who take his advice don't stumble and fall. However, a treacherous man, is a man who refuses to listen to wise counsel and therefore does not see the pitfalls up ahead and falls right into them. For him the journey of life is like walking on a rocky road, with plenty of objects to trip you up.
16	A wise man thinks ahead; a fool does not and even brags about it.	A wise man plans for the future and stores up supplies for the lean years. A fool does not plan ahead and even brags about it, but he ends up without food or shelter.
17	An unreliable messenger can cause a lot of trouble. Reliable communication permits progress.	If you listen to a messenger from Satan you will end up in trouble, but reliable communication comes only from God and when we listen to God's messengers only we grow spiritually in knowledge and wisdom.
18	If you refuse criticism you will end up in poverty and disgrace; if you accept criticism, you are on the road to fame.	Those who refuse criticism are people who refuse to change their ways and end up in poverty and disgrace. If you accept criticism, you are able to change your ways and are now on the road to fame and fortune.
19	It is pleasant to see plans develop. That is why fools refuse to give them up even when they are wrong.	It is great to see a building take shape, when you see the plans become a reality. However, the plans of fools are doomed before they start, because their expectations are based upon wrong values.
20	Be with the wise men and become wise. Be with evil men and become evil.	It is said that if you sleep with dogs you will end up with fleas. Similarly, if you be with wise men, you will become wise. On the other hand, if you stay with evil men, you will become evil like them. All people are influenced by their surroundings.

21	Curses chase sinners, while blessings chase the righteous.	Choose which ones you want – blessings or curses. As for me and my house we will serve the Lord.
22	When a good man dies, he leaves an inheritance to his grandchildren; but when a sinner dies, his wealth is stored up for the godly.	A good man passes on an inheritance to his grandchildren, but the wealth of a sinner is stored up and given to the righteous, the godly and not to the sinner's children or grandchildren. So be righteous and receive a double blessing.
23	A poor man's farm may have good soil, but injustice robs him of its riches.	A poor man labours in good soil on his farm and receives a bountiful harvest, but wicked men use trickery to rob him of the money from his harvest.
24	If you refuse to discipline your son, it proves that you do not love him; for if you love him, you will be prompt to punish him.	If you spare the rod, you spoil the child. If a child does something wrong, he needs to be corrected. He may not know it is wrong, or he may not understand the ramifications of his actions and this could lead to more serious trouble. If you really do love your child, you will correct him, so that he does not get into more serious trouble.
25	The good man eats to live. While the evil man lives to eat.	For a good man, eating is not the first priority in his life; but the for evil man eating is more important than living a righteous life.

CHAPTER 27: PROVERBS CHAPTER 14

Verse	Verse words	Comments
1	A wise woman, builds her house, while a foolish woman, tears hers down by her own efforts.	A wise woman, is careful and prudent with her finances and does not make rash decision, hence her house is built on a sound foundation which is Jesus Christ. However, a foolish woman spends more on herself and does not exercise care for her house or for her family, which leads to her downfall. Notice a man is not mentioned in this verse at all.
2	To do right honours God; to sin is to despise Him.	As Christians we are to be the image of Christ in all we say and do, and this brings honour to God. If we sin, we are in rebellion against God and what He suffered on the cross for us and we are despising Him by our actions.
3	A rebel's foolish talk should prick his own pride! But the wise man's speech is respected.	What a foolish man says identifies his own stupidity by speaking without thinking, but a wise man thinks before he speaks and is therefore respected because what he says makes sense.
4	An empty stable stays clean, but there is no income from an empty stable.	If you want to make an income you must be prepared to clean up the mess in the stable. If you want to be seen righteous by Jesus, you must clean yourself up so there can be a spiritual reward.
5	A truthful witness never lies; a false witness always lies.	In the 10 commandments we are commanded not to be a false witness, for the wages of sin is death.

6	A mocker never finds the wisdom he claims he is looking for, yet it comes easily to the man with common sense.	A man who follows Jesus and his laws has no trouble finding wisdom, because the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. However, the person who does not follow Jesus, is always looking for something, but there is no peace in his heart, so he never finds wisdom, because wisdom comes from God.
7	If you are looking for advice, stay away from fools	Good advice only comes from people who fear God, read His word, seek His face, and be attentive to what the Holy Spirit says to them. All other advice will ultimately lead to destruction.
8	The wise man looks ahead. The fool attempts to fool himself and won't face the facts.	Because a wise man listens to the Holy Spirit, he can plan ahead and be prepared for trials before they come upon him. A fool refuses to acknowledge what is right in front of his nose and takes no evasive actions to avoid destruction, until it's too late.
9	The common bond of rebels is their guilt. The common bond of godly people is good will.	We look to ISIS at the moment and see that this is a true situation. Their guilt and shame keeps them captive and they keep on killing others. But godly people have had their guilt and shame taken away by the blood of Jesus Christ, so they no longer need to kill and destroy, because of the good will of the Father who sent His only Son to die for us on the cross.
10	Only the person involved can know his own bitterness or joy – no one else can really share it.	Many people try to understand what you are going through, but only the individual person can understand the hurt, the bitterness, or the pain, that anyone is really suffering. This also applies to joy; only the individual experiencing joy can really understand what it is like for them.
11	The work of the wicked will perish; the work of the godly will flourish.	History shows what happened to many wicked rich men, they even had their own empires, but because of their wickedness their empires came crashing down around them, whilst the godly man's works bought him riches which continued to flourish as a blessing for generations.
12	Before every man their lies a wide and pleasant road that seems right, but ends in death.	The road to hell is a freeway and many people with good intentions die on this road, because it seemed to be the right path to follow. But the road to heaven is a narrow path and very few people find it, or reach the end of the pathway into heaven.
13	Laughter cannot mask a heavy heart. When the laughter ends, the grief remains.	You can put on a mask, laugh and appear to be happy, but when you are all alone and the laughter stops, the grief and pain in your heart still remains.
14	The backslider gets bored with himself, but the godly man's life is exciting.	This is a good test of your spiritual thermometer. Are you bored or are you excited? This will tell you whether you are backsliding or not.

15	Only a simpleton believes what he is told! A prudent man checks to see where he is going.	The Oxford Dictionary says a "simpleton" is a gullible person, or someone who believes everything they are told. These types of people, are easily fooled and misled. The prudent (or wise) man checks what he has been told to see if it lines up with the word of God, and if it does, only then does he accept it before moving on.
16	A wise man is cautious and avoids danger; a fool plunges ahead with great confidence.	A wise man takes one step at a time, but a fool-rushes in where angels fear to tread and as a result, end up in destruction.
17	A short tempered man is a fool. He hates the man who is patient.	A man who has a short fuse easily loses his temper, and is considered by God to be a fool. Because of this he hates a man who is wise and patient, because God considers him to be a blessing.
18	A simpleton is crowned with folly; the wise man is crowned with knowledge.	The gullible man's values are worthless, because when they are tested they are shown to be of no value. But the wise man's values are based upon knowledge and experience and hence is valued beyond measure.
19	Evil men shall bow before the godly.	Every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. Those who love God shall do this as praise, but the evil ones shall do it by force, before the godly.
20	Even his own neighbours despise the poor man, while the rich have many friends.	In the parable of the Prodigal Son, he had many friends while he was rich, but as soon as the money was no longer available, his friends despised him and went on their way, leaving him all alone to eat the food for the pigs.
21	To despise the poor is a sin; blessed are those who pity them.	Many people despise the poor and the needy refugees at the moment, and God says (not me) that they are committing a sin. However God will bless all those who have pity on these, the least of my children.
22	Those who plot evil shall wander away and be lost, but those who plan good shall be granted mercy and quietness.	Those who plot evil become trapped in their own evil schemes and are eventually lost, but those make plans for the goodness of others, are granted blessings of mercy, peace and quietness from God as their reward.
23	Work brings profit; talk brings poverty.	Work (with actions) brings a wage and profit, but a fool who talks, but (does no action) ends up in poverty.
24	Wise men are praised for their wisdom; fools are despised for their folly	People praise a wise man, but they despise a fool because all their scheming results in nothing but poverty and disaster.
25	A witness who tells the truth saves good men from being sentenced to death, but a false witness is a traitor.	A false witness commits perjury and conspires to pervert the course of justice, which may cause an innocent man to be sentenced to death. If he is captured he will also end up in prison. On the other hand a man who tells the truth is glorified by God and his reward and he helps to save innocent lives.

26	Reverence for God gives a man deep strength; his children have a place of refuge and security.	Reverence for God is the beginning of wisdom. A person who fears God is protected by God and so are his children.
27	Reverence for the Lord is a fountain of life; its waters keep a man from death.	The reverential fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and it gives continuous life; the rivers of living water flowing down from heaven keeps a man from eternal death.
28	A growing population is a king's glory; a dwindling nation is his doom.	When you see a nation on the increase you see the signs from heaven that God is blessing the nation. However, when you see the nation's people fleeing it is a sign of the nation's impending doom.
29	A wise man (or woman) controls his/her temper. He knows that anger causes mistakes.	How many times have we seen reports on TV where somebody lost their temper and domestic violence resulted in one or both of the partners being injured needing hospital treatment; or in other cases a death results and the other person is placed into prison.
30	A relaxed attitude lengthens a man's life; jealousy rots it away.	To be relaxed in yourself, you must know who you are in Christ and this leads to an extended life. People who are jealous are the ones who covet what another person has. We are told in scripture not to covet other people's good, or lifestyle.
31	Anyone who oppresses the poor is insulting God who made them. To help the poor is to honour God.	Anyone (or any government) who oppresses the poor is insulting God and will be dealt with in God's time, because God does not like being insulted. However, helping the poor honours God and those who do this will be rewarded in this life and in the one to come.
32	The godly have a refuge when they die, but the wicked are crushed by their sins.	When godly people die their spirit goes to live in paradise waiting for the sound of the trumpet so they can rise to meet Jesus in the clouds. But the wicked can only wait for the destruction which was prophesied would be their reward for rebelling against God.
33	Wisdom is enshrined in the hearts of men of common sense; but it (wisdom) must shout loudly before fools hear it.	Wisdom is second nature to people who fear God and have common sense. But fools have shut their ears to wisdom and so it must be shouted from the rooftops before they even hear it. However, being fools they will still probably ignore it.
34	Godliness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.	Godliness (righteousness) exalts a nation, but sin (rebellion against God) is a reproach to God and to all the people, because God removes His blessings from them.
35	A king rejoices in servants who know what they are doing; he is angry with those who cause trouble.	A king rejoices when he sees his servants working harmoniously together, because peace and prosperity follows, but the king becomes angry with all who cause trouble because they interrupt peace and prosperity suffers.

CHAPTER 28: PROVERBS CHAPTER 15

Verse #	Verse details	Comments
1	A soft answer turns away wrath, but harsh words cause quarrels	A soft voice reduces stress and soothes the possibility of anger, but harsh words increases stress, brings on anger and causes quarrels
2	A wise teacher makes learning a joy; a rebellious teacher spouts foolishness	I am sure we can all remember a teacher from our school days, who made learning the subjects he/she taught a pleasant experience; and we can also remember other teachers that we did not like, because they did not seem to teach us anything, or they taught the subject material incorrectly.
3	The Lord is watching everywhere and keeps his eyes on both the evil and the good	There is nowhere on this earth that we can go that the Lord is not watching us. Notice the order, God keeps an eye on (1) the evil and (2) the good.
4	Gentle words cause life and health; griping brings discouragement	Gentle words brings life and health because gentle words reduces stress. Griping (complaining) causes increased stress, removes joy, brings discouragement and ultimately reduces life and health, hence helps cause an early death.
5	Only a fool despises a father's advice; a wise son considers each suggestion.	We are told to honour our father and our mother and this extends our lives. Therefore when a father gives advice to a son or daughter, it should be listened to because of the father's life experiences. It should be evaluated calmly before any decision is made.
6	There is treasure in doing good; but trouble dogs the wicked	If you do good to others God sees it and rewards you with blessings. But God also sees what people do who cause trouble and allows them to be placed into situations where they receive a reward for their actions, but unfortunately that rewards is trouble to their souls
7	Only the good can give good advice; Rebels can't	Only the good can give good advice and good counsel. On the other hand those who are already in rebellion against God, cannot give good advice because it is against their rebellious nature
8	The Lords hates the gifts of the wicked, but delights in the prayers of his people.	If you are wicked and refuse to repent, God will not accept your gifts made to him, irrespective of what they are. God only receives gifts or prayers from a people with a contrite, repentant heart.
9-10	The Lord despises the deeds of the wicked, but loves those who try to be good. If they stop trying, the Lord will punish them; if they rebel against that punishment they will die.	God hates the ways of the wicked, but loves those who repent and try to mend their ways. However, if they backslide God will punish them, as a warning to repent again and come back to the ways of the Lord. If they continue to rebel against God's word even after they have been warned by God, they will die in their sins. This is a very serious warning for all Christians, once you are saved you cannot continue to sin and think everything will still be OK, because it won't!

11	The depths of hell are open to God's knowledge. How much more the hearts of all mankind.	The people in Hell have heard God's message, because Jesus went down into hell and preached to them, so that those who had never heard a message about salvation through Jesus Christ could have an opportunity for salvation. How much then are the hearts of men able to hear God's message if they are still alive. It is our responsibility to make sure that they do hear it and see it being practised in our individual and collective lives.
12	A mocker stays away from wise men, but he hates to be scolded.	A mocker is a person who makes jokes about all situations, always pointing out the bad things which have been done and never giving any credit for the good things that a person does. But when they do something wrong they don't like to be scolded. They like to give out, but they don't like to be treated, as they treat others.
13	A happy face means a glad heart; a sad face means a breaking heart.	Out of your mouth your heart speaks. So your face is a mirror for your heart. If you are smiling, your heart is happy. If you are sad, it is not well with your heart.
14	A wise man is hungry for truth, while a mocker feeds on trash.	Wise men always weigh up the evidence to make sure it lines up with the truth of God's word, while a mocker (fool) believes everything he hears and reads, without verifying its accuracy.
15	When a man is gloomy, everything seems to go wrong; when he is cheerful, everything seems right	We are told to praise the Lord in all situations, so that the Lord can do what is right for us. Even though the situation may seem difficult, it seems right because we have faith that God is in the situation with us. However, when we are gloomy, we are not giving praise, glory or honour to God, so the situation seems to be all wrong.
16	Better a little with reverence to God, than great treasure and trouble with it.	You have seen many documentaries where people who know God, living with next to nothing seem happy, whilst people who are multi-millionaires commit suicide because they cannot buy happiness, no matter how hard you try.
17	It is better to eat soup with someone you love than to eat steak with someone you hate.	Because you love the person you are with, the soup tastes great, but when you are eating with a person that you hate, the steak does not taste good, no matter how well it has been prepared and cooked. Your relationship with people will determine your taste for the food.
18	A quick-tempered man starts fighting; a cool-tempered man tries to stop them.	A cool tempered man will sometimes walk away, so that a fight cannot start. This takes courage, he is not a coward for doing this.
19	A lazy fellow has trouble all through his life; the good man's path is easy!	God protects the ways of a good man, so that his path is made easy, but the lazy man has no respect for God, so God allows him to fall into traps, as a warning for him to change. As we have already seen in a previous scripture, God sends the warnings, but if the person continues to do evil they will die in their sins.
20	A sensible son gladdens his father. A rebellious son saddens his mother	Fathers take credit for their good sons, but disown the rebellious ones. Because mothers love all their sons, a rebellious son causes her to grieve.

21	If a man enjoys folly, something is wrong! The sensible stays on the pathways of right.	A person who loves what is evil is not honouring God, but a person who searches after righteousness is always on the right path and God watches over him.
22	Plans go wrong with too few counsellors; many counsellors bring success.	Sometimes this verse is hard to understand. Moses sent out 12 princes to spy out the Promised Land and 10 came back with a report which said it was impossible to take the land. (Many counsellors, but wrong counsel. Beware of the counsel of the ungodly). But Joshua and Caleb said that they could take on these nations and win because God had already promised the land to the nation of Israel.
23	Everyone enjoys giving good advice, and how wonderful it is to be able to say the right thing at the right time.	The scriptures tell us not to think about what we are to say, because the Holy Spirit will give us the right words to say at the right time – that is if we are attuned to God and trust His Holy Spirit to speak through us.
24	The road of the godly leads upwards, leaving hell behind.	If we really trust in the Lord, then we will move higher and higher in spiritual maturity, hence upwards towards heaven, leaving hell way behind us, because our focus in now on Jesus Christ and heaven, not on Satan and hell.
25	The Lord destroys the possessions of the proud, but cares for the widows.	Pride comes before a fall. Therefore, they will not receive any blessings from God, in fact God will allow their fields to be destroyed, they will plant but others will reap the harvest. God always provides for the widows in the scriptures. The widow in Zarephath who fed Elijah during the famine, the widow whose son Elisha brought back to life, and the widow whose son died and Jesus brought back to life while the coffin was on its way to be buried.
26	The Lord hates the thoughts of the wicked, but delights in pure kind words.	God loves to hear kind words spoken, but hates the thoughts of evil men even before they are spoken, therefore we should think before we speak, because out of the heart the mouth speaks.
27	Dishonest money brings grief to all the family, but hating bribes brings happiness.	No matter who obtained dishonest money in a family, whether it be by wrongly claiming Centrelink payments, or not declaring all of your income on your tax returns, the whole family will suffer the consequences of this evil deed. But those who hate bribes, who strive after righteousness will be happy and rewarded by God.
28	A good man thinks before he speaks; the evil man pours out his evil words without a thought.	A good man speaks from a good heart and hurts no-one with his words. An evil man speaks from an evil heart, and gives no thought to what he says, nor the implications of what he says upon those who hears his words.
29	The Lord is far from the wicked, but he hears the prayers of the righteous.	2 Chronicles 7:14 says that God will not even listen to the prayers of unrighteous people. But He will listen from heaven, forgive the sins and heal the lands of the righteous ones.

30	Pleasant sights, and good reports give happiness and health.	A merry heart does good like a medicine. When we see beautiful things and hear good reports it brings joy to our hearts. The opposite is the case for evil sights and bad reports.
31-32	If you profit from constructive criticism, you will be elected to the wise men's hall of fame. But to reject criticism is to harm yourself, and your own best interests.	God corrects us because He loves us. Constructive criticism is given by a person who loves you so that you can correct you ways, become wise and improve your position. Those who reject wise counsel are just plain stupid and will never amount to anything.
33	Humility and reverence for the Lord will make you both wise and honoured.	This is a basic lesson that all Christians must learn, put God first with humility and reverential fear and God will raise you up.

CHAPTER 29: PROVERBS CHAPTER 16

Verse #	Verse Details	Comments
1	We can make our plans, but the final outcome is always in God's hands	God's ways are higher than our ways and God's ways are always perfect. Therefore, even if we make plans (which we think are perfect) they still have to be lined up against God's eternal plan for us, and sometimes He changes our plans to line up with His.
2	We can always "prove" that we are right, but it God convinced?	If we cannot convince God that we are right, then our arguments (irrespective of how well we debate them) are still wrong.
3	Commit your work to the Lord and it will succeed.	If you commit your work to the Lord, it will line up with God's intentions, because your heart is focussed on God and His word. Because of this, God will bless you with success, because He wants you to be a positive witness for Him in all you say and do.
4	The Lord has made everything for His purposes – even the wicked, for punishment.	This puts a different thought process on all the evil we see in the world today. They are there for God's purposes - for His punishment, and so that we can teach them about the Love of Christ and bring them to a place of salvation.
5	Pride disgusts the Lord. Take my word for it. Proud men shall be punished.	Pride comes before a fall. History has shown this statement to be true many times. God allows people to be raised up, but when pride takes over He brings them down to earth once again.
6	Iniquity is atoned for by mercy and truth; evil is avoided by reverence to God.	If you has a reverential fear of the Lord you will avoid evil. If you fall into iniquity, repentance brings forth the mercy and truth of God's word for you. Jesus rejoices in each sinner who repents and comes back into the fold of grace and mercy.

7	When a man is trying to please God, God makes even his worst enemies to be at peace with him.	If you want complete peace in your life, then try to please God, with your thinking, what you say, and what you do; at all times following, and being obedient to His divine word; because God will put influence upon your enemies, forcing them to be at peace with you.
8	A little gained honestly, is better than great wealth gotten by dishonest means.	There is no peace in a person's heart of wealth gained by dishonest means, because the person always worries that someone will find out and it will be all taken away from him. An honest man gives thanks to God for what he has and there is peace in his heart.
9	We should make plans – counting on God to guide us	There are many records in the scriptures where people made plans, some were victories and other were great failures. The victories were when the people enquired of God and talked about their plans with Him, so He could guide their paths to bring success to their plans and glory to God.
10	God will help the king to judge the people fairly; there need be no mistakes.	We often hear of a man being put in prison for a crime he did not commit. This proves that the judges making these judgements do not go to the Lord for guidance, because God never makes mistakes.
11	The Lord demands fairness in every business deal. He established this principle.	If God established this principle, then God's law must be followed. For those who refuse to follow God's laws, God allows punishment to follow after them. They don't win in the long run!!!
12	It is a horrible thing for a king to do evil. His right to rule depends upon his fairness (for his throne is established upon righteousness)	We see what happened to King David when he did evil. His first born son to Beersheba died. A king's rule is established upon righteousness, because righteousness exalts a nation.
13	The king rejoices when his people are truthful and fair.	Therefore a nation rejoices when they see their leaders being truthful and fair is all respects to the people that they govern. Similarly, Jesus rejoices when He see His people (Christians) being truthful and fair to each other, and to the unbelievers who are yet to acknowledge Him as their Saviour.
14	The anger of a king is the messenger of death and a wise man will appease it.	God was going to destroy the nation of Israel because of their disobedience, but Moses (the wise man) argued with God and convinced Him to change His mind. God agreed not to destroy them, but for their evil they were forced to wander in the wilderness for 40 years until all the people over 20 years of age who left Egypt had died, except Joshua and Caleb.
15	Many favours are shown on those who please the king	How much more will favours be shown upon those who please God Almighty. God has promised to pour out His blessings upon all those who please Him.

16	How much better is wisdom than gold, and understanding than silver.	The people of the worldview strive after silver and gold, as a sign of their success here on earth. But you can't take any of it with you when you die. The people of God strive for wisdom and understanding, so that they can store up treasures in heaven, where robbers and moths do not have access to it.
17	The path of the godly leads away from evil; he who follows this path is safe.	The roadway to Hell is a super highway and millions travel this path to destruction; the path of the godly is narrow, and it leads away from evil. Few find it, but it leads on to glory. Which path are you travelling on today?
18	Pride goes before destruction and haughtiness before a fall.	Pride is the opposite to **humbleness**; Haughtiness is the opposite to **humility, meekness & modesty**. These are the attributes that God wants in all of His believers.
19	Better poor and humble than proud and rich	God can raise up the poor and humble man, but God can also subdue the proud rich man and take away all of his possessions, if he fails to recognise and honour God in his life.
20	God blesses those who obey Him; happy is the man who puts his trust in the Lord.	Are you happy, or are you blue, It depends on your obedience to God, It's not about you. Those who put their trust in God, Will be spared from the sword and the rod.
21	The wise man is known by his common sense; and a pleasant teacher is the best.	A wise man seems to have all the answers and they make sense. If he teaches, he is pleasant and kind and his students learn much from him. Even long after they have left school, they will remember what they have been taught, by a wise man; but what was taught by a foolish man is soon forgotten.
22	Wisdom is a fountain of life to those possessing it, but a fool's burden is his folly	To those who seek after and find wisdom God gives extended life; while the foolish die at a younger age.
23	From a wise mind comes careful and persuasive speech.	A wise man can speak his thoughts in such a way to convince his audience that what he says in right, but a fool with not be as successful.
24	Kind words are like honey – enjoyable and healthy.	Kind words bring peace to any situation, like healing balm to a wound. We should all strive to say kind words only. Hateful and spiteful words are like a sword cutting deep to the bone, leaving hurt and wounds which need further attention.
25	Before every man there lies a wide and pleasant road, he thinks is right, but it ends in death.	What we think, without confirmation from Jesus, always leads to destruction and death. That is why we are told to take all our supplications and questions to Him, so He can re-direct our paths back onto the CORRECT PATH.

26	Hunger is good – if it makes you work to satisfy it.	When you work, your hands are not idle, so the devil has a harder job to divert your attention to other things.
27	Idle hands are the devil's workshop; idle lips are his mouthpiece.	Out of the heart the mouth speaks. If you are idle, you have two choices; • Seek the Lord and do what is right, or • Open your heart to the evil of this world. There is no middle ground on this issue.
28	An evil man sow's strife; gossip separates the best of friends	An evil man can never do good, because it is against his nature. The scriptures tell us that God considers gossip to be ungodliness. In both situations evil abounds and God is not glorified at all.
29	Wickedness loves company – and leads others into sin.	A drug dealer cannot work in isolation, he needs others to drag down to his level of sin. So, it is in many situations in the world today.
30	The wicked man stares into space with pursed lips, deep in thought, planning his evil deeds.	The evil of man is not spontaneous, it is carefully planned to deceive even the most unsuspecting Christian, who has a small cleft open into his heart.
31	White hair is a crown of glory and is seen mostly among the godly.	Whiter hair is seen as a sign of wisdom upon a man, but the world has told women to cover their white hair, to disguise their wisdom and take glory away from God.
32	It is better to be slow-tempered than famous; it is better to have self-control that to control an army.	That is seen in many of the movies about Hitler. He had a terrible temper and made many of his wrong decisions because upon his anger, instead of good judgement. This resulted in the downfall of a complete nation.
33	We toss the coin; but it is the Lord who controls the decision.	Have you ever thought about this? Yes, Australians are famous for playing 2-up, but have you ever thought that it is God Almighty who decides is it falls down heads or tails. God does miracles in many ways we are yet to understand, but in all things God's ways are perfect.

CHAPTER 30: PROVERBS CHAPTER 17

Verse #	Verse	Comments
1	A meal of bread and water in contented peace is better that a banquet spiced with quarrels	Spices, like quarrels, causes indigestion and hence the meal is not enjoyed, but the peace of God passes all understanding.
2	A wise servant takes charge of an unruly child and is honoured as one of the family	We know the saying: Spare the rod and spoil the child, well here the Master of the house recognises that the servant is teaching the child the proper ways to behave and he is therefore rewarded.

3	As silver in a crucible and gold in a pan, so our lives are assayed by God	When you put silver in a crucible, it melted the dross (waste particles) are removed, and the silver becomes purer. Similarly, gold in a pan is separated from the mud by the sluicing of the water through it. God uses similar methods to shake us, and sift us to make us a purer part of the Bride – a bride without blemish
4	Evil people relish malicious conversation, the ears of liars itch for dirty gossip	As has been seen in our previous studies, God considers malicious conversations & dirty gossip to be ungodliness & that is why it is considered by God to be a sin.
5	Whoever mocks poor people, insults their Creator, gloating over misfortune is a punishable crime	Jesus said that there will always be poor among us, but we are to exercise mercy and compassion towards them. Anyone who does not has committed a sin in God's eyes.
6	Old people are distinguished by grandchildren; children take pride in their parents	The scripture tells us to honour our fathers and our mothers. It is the first promise of God which guarantees that we will have an extended life. Grandparents see the seeds of their labour flow into a second generation.
7	We don't expect eloquence from fools, nor do we expect lies from our leaders.	We are told to pray for our leaders, so that they do not fall into this trap, because God holds them to a higher level of accountability than us.
8	Receiving a gift is like getting a rare gemstone, any way you look at it, you see beauty reflected	Any gift you receive has a love stamp attached. That is why the gift of Jesus Christ is so precious.
9	Overlook an offense and make a bond of friendship, fasten on to a slight and – goodbye friend	The love of God covers a multitude of sins, therefore when we exercise God's love to others in forgiveness, we are rewarded. When we complain about something, Satan has an opportunity to step in a cause division and distress.
10	A quite rebuke to a person of good sense does more than a wack on the head of a fool	A person of good sense will respond to a quiet word, whilst a fool will react to a wack on the head and learns nothing from the experience at all.
11	Criminals out looking for nothing but trouble will not have long to wait – they'll meet it coming and going.	If you go out looking for trouble, then trouble will come looking for you, because Satan is always looking for people to destroy or harm.
12	Better to meet a grizzly robbed of her cubs than a fool hell bent on folly	A grizzly may kill your body, but your spirit remains intact, whilst a fool will damage your spirit if you join in his folly
13	Those who return evil for good will meet their own evil returning	The scriptures tell us you reap what you sow. If you sow evil, that is also what you will reap.
14	The start of a quarrel is like a leak in a dam wall, so stop it before it bursts	Many times biting one's tongue is the first sign of wisdom, it stops further destruction.

15	Whitewashing bad people and throwing mud on good people are equally abhorrent to God	God does not like anything false. Pretending that bad people are good, and that good people are bad, is the same sin in God's eyes.
16	What's this? Fools out shopping for wisdom! They would not recognise it even if they saw it.	The reverential fear of the Lord is the first step towards wisdom, but fools would not recognise wisdom, otherwise they would no longer be considered as fools.
17	Friends love through all kinds of weather, and families stick together in all kinds of trouble	This is the basic test of any congregation. Do they love you under all situations? Are they really a family that stick together in all kinds of trouble?
18	It's stupid to try to get something for nothing, or run up large bills you can never repay.	Money does not grow on trees, neither does wisdom. People who think they can get something for nothing forget that there is no such thing as a free lunch, there are always consequences, just like running up bills you cannot repay. Bankruptcy has its own repercussions and punishments.
19	The person who courts sin, marries trouble, build a wall, invite a burglar	People who court sin are blinded by satan to the possible outcomes and hence marry and the result is no peace in their marriages. It is better to build a wall and invite a burglar, who will then be prevented from entering.
20	A bad motive can't achieve a good end, double-talk brings you double-trouble	God cannot repay evil with good, hence any talking which is not truthful will bring no peace.
21	Having a fool for a child is a misery, it is no fun being the parent of a dolt	Having a fool for a child is a clear reflection of their parents, who did not teach them correctly Dolt = an offensive term that deliberately insults somebody's intelligence. Therefore, no joy will come of this outcome.
22	A cheerful disposition is good for your health, gloom and doom leave you bone-tired.	A merry heart does good like a medicine, but doom and gloom lead to an early death
23	The wicked take bribes under the table; they show nothing but contempt for justice	Those who take bribes are only fooling themselves, God is watching and His justice it eternal.
24	The perceptive find wisdom in their own front yard; fools look everywhere but never find it.	Perception requires deep thought and wisdom is the reward, but fools never think things through, so they miss their opportunity to receive any rewards
25	A surly, stupid child is sheer pain to a father and a bitter pill for the mother to swallow	Raise up children in the knowledge and admonition of the Lord and they will bless you all of your life, but raising up a fool only causes pain and heartache.
26	It's wrong to penalise good behaviour, or make good citizens pay for the crimes of others.	This is the definition of corruption, when you punish the innocent to protect the guilty

27	The one who knows much says little, an understanding person remains calm	When people are tearing their hair out over some disaster, the wise man is not seen or heard, but sits quietly and remains calm, saying very little.
28	Even dunces who keep quiet are thought to be wise; just as long as they keep their mouths shut, they're smart.	Our mouths speak the words from our hearts. If there is no peace in our hearts, then the fools are exposed very quickly.

CHAPTER 31: PROVERBS CHAPTER 18

Verse #	Verse	Comments
1	The selfish man quarrels against every sound principle of conduct by demanding his own way	We have a choice; our way, or God's way. God's way is always perfect and brings blessings and peace; our way only leads to destruction.
2	A rebel does not care about the facts. All he wants to do is yell.	A rebel, like a lazy journalist does not let the facts interfere with a good story. A rebel believes that if he yells loud enough and long enough he will get his own way. Like the selfish man above, your own way leads only to destruction.
3	Sin brings disgrace	Sin brings disgrace, but the blood of Jesus frees us from the punishment of sin and this truth will set you free from that 'sin' disgrace.
4	A wise man's words express deep streams of thought.	A wise man thinks before he speaks, but a fool engages mouth before his brain.
5	It is wrong for a judge to favour the wicked and condemn the innocent.	This is the basic definition of corruption: To persecute the innocent to protect the guilty. God's word makes it clear; corruption is a sin and this judge will have to give an account of his sin before the judgement seat of heaven.
6,7	A fool gets into constant fights. His mouth is his undoing! His words endanger him.	Out of your mouth, your heart speaks. When your heart is not right with God, it cannot be right with mankind, hence get you heart right with God; or face eternity without him.
8	What dainty morsels rumour are. They are eaten with great relish.	Not all things that taste good, are good for you. By accepting a rumour, you are spreading gossip and God considers gossip to be ungodliness.

9	A lazy man is brother to a saboteur. Another translation: *He also that is slothful in his work is brother to him that is a great waster.*	Have you ever considered that a lazy man is a brother to a terrorist, or to a person who knowingly wastes what he has? A terrorist takes away what is lawfully not his, whilst a waster gives away what is his, but it benefits no-one.
10	The Lord is a strong fortress. The godly run to him and are safe.	When we run into the fortress of our Lord, the enemy is defeated because he cannot penetrate God's armour of protection around us.
11	The rich man thinks of his wealth as an impregnable defence, a high wall of safety. What a dreamer!	God raises up and God pulls down. God can allow a person to become rich, but our God can also remove that wealth. When we trust in money as our defence, we are fools and dreamers. It has no protection for us at all.
12	Pride ends in destruction; humility ends in honour.	Pride comes before a fall, which leads to your ultimate destruction. But God Himself raises up the humble to positions of honour in His house.
13	What a shame – yes, how stupid, to decide before knowing the facts.	It is easy to make snap decisions, but without knowing the facts, there is a very good chance that your decision will be wrong, making you look like a fool. It is better to wait, collect all the facts, and then make your decision carefully, based upon all of the evidence.
14	A man's courage can sustain his broken body, but when courage dies, what hope is left?	A courageous man takes his strength from the Lord, but a man who does not know the Lord has no hope and no courage, hence he dies and satan claims another victim.
15	The intelligent man is always open to new ideas. In fact, he looks for them.	An intelligent man is always looking for new ways to do things, to make his life easier. From these new ideas come new inventions.
16	A bribe does wonders; it brings you before men of importance. Another translation: *A man's gift makes room for him, and brings him before great men.*	I have always been taught that to give a bribe was wrong. In fact in Australia, you can be sent to jail, if found guilty of giving, or receiving a bribe. But that is not what is meant here. The bribe (gift) gets you to see a man of importance that you may not normally be able to see, because of your low status, but it does not ask this man to commit a crime. If there is criminal intent in paying the money, then it is wrong.

17	Any story sounds true until someone tells the other side of the story and sets the record straight.	That is why when you go into court to give evidence, you have to swear to tell the truth, the whole truth (not just part of the truth) and you make this oath before God, the ultimate judge. Lawyers are skilled in telling part of the truth to assist their clients, but the judge and the jury have to make their decisions, based upon all of the facts, not just some of them.
18	A coin toss ends arguments and settles disputes between powerful opponents.	Can you imagine two great armies facing each other on the battle field and the two generals settling the war by tossing a coin into the air? No! neither can I. We are told to trust in God, not on chance.
19	It is harder to win back the friendship of an offended brother than to capture a fortified city. His anger shuts you out like iron bars.	When you offend a friend you injure his trust and this takes many years to heal. It is better to go to him, confess your fault and ask for his forgiveness.
20	The ability to give wise advice satisfies like a good meal.	Knowing that your good advice has helped someone is refreshing and satisfying. But giving bad advice leaves a bad taste in your mouth, and no peace.
21	Those who love to talk will suffer the consequences. Men have died for saying the wrong thing.	Proverbs chapter 6 says that you are trapped by the words of your mouth. Out of your heart your mouth speaks. If you say the wrong thing, your heart is revealed and you suffer the consequences. God does not look at the outside, God looks at the heart.
22	A man who finds a wife finds a good thing; she is a blessing to him from the Lord.	This is a true statement and I can testify that it is true. A godly wife is a blessing from the Lord.
23	The poor man pleads and the rich man answers with insults.	A poor man pleads his case and God hears Him and he is rewarded, but a rich man answers with insults and in not rewarded, in fact his riches maybe taken away.

24	There are "friends" who pretend to be friends, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.	There are many who pretend to be your friend while you have wealth or position, but like the prodigal son, when the money runs out, so the friendship vanishes. But Jesus is the friend who has promised to never leave us nor forsake us, no matter what are the circumstances. He sticks closer than a brother, through thick or thin, and He always has your best interests at heart.

CHAPTER 32: PROVERBS CHAPTER 19

Verse #	Verse	Comments
1	Better to be poor and honest than rich and dishonest.	Honesty and righteousness are God character attributes and He will protect and rewards all those who exhibit these examples, which dishonesty is a character trait of Satan and his destination is destruction
2	It is dangerous and sinful to rush into the unknown	Fools rush in where angels fear to tread. Before you go into any situation you should pray for guidance. It is dangerous and sinful to ignore the advice of God in His word.
3	A man may ruin his chances by his own foolishness and then blame it on the Lord.	A man who refuses to acknowledge his own mistakes has a fool for a judge and brings disrespect upon the Lord.
4	A wealthy man has many "friends"; the poor man has none left.	When a wealthy man's money runs out, so does his "friends".
5	Punish false witnesses. Track down liars.	The 10 commandments are quite clear. Thou shalt not bear false witness. To lie is to deliberately hide the truth and this is against Christ, because Jesus said: I AM the way, I AM the truth, I AM the life, no man comes to the Father except through me.
6	Many beg favours from a man who is generous; everyone is his friend.	A friend who is generous is better than a millionaire who keeps all his money to himself.
7	A poor man's own brother turns away from him in embarrassment; (in the name of the Lord) how much more his friends! He calls after them, but they are gone.	Are you embarrassed by your family members? Are your friends ashamed of you? These characteristics indicate the level of spiritual maturity each person has around you --- including you.
8	He who loves wisdom, loves his own best interests and will be a success.	The person who loves wisdom sets his heart on the things of God, because the search for reverential fear (of God) is the first step towards wisdom. Those who search for God are always a success.
9	A false witness shall be punished and the shall be caught.	Neither the false witness, nor the liar will ever succeed, because both go against

		God's laws and therefore God cannot bless their endeavours.
10	It doesn't seem right for a fool to succeed, or for a slave to rule over princes.	If a fool succeeded, he would no longer be a fool, so it is foolish to even assume that a fool will succeed. For a slave to rule over a prince indicates that the prince is weak and unable to claim his rightful place of leadership.
11	A wised man restrains his anger and overlooks insults. This is to his credit.	When you overlook and do not react to insults you build up credits in heaven, which cover a multitude of sins.
12	The king's anger is a dangerous as that of a lion. But his approval is as refreshing as the dew on the grass.	One word from an angry king can result in people being put to death; but to receive praise from the king lifts a person to new heights among his neighbours.
13	A rebellious son is a calamity to his father, and a nagging wife annoys like a constant dripping roof.	A rebellious son reflects badly on the father who failed to teach him properly, whilst a nagging wife is continually interrupting the peace of the household.
14	A father can give his sons homes and riches, but only the Lord can give them understanding wives.	The home and the riches are just temporary comforts, but God gives a wife who is a lifelong comfort.
15	A lazy man sleeps soundly – and goes hungry	Man shall not live by bread alone, you need to work to earn the money to buy the bread. NO WORK? NO EAT!!!
16	Keep the commandments and keep your life; despising them means death.	Many people say we live under the new covenant, so we don't have to keep these Old Testament commandments. But our legal system embodies these laws, so even our lawmakers consider that we should keep them. If you don't obey God's laws, you are not obeying God, therefore why would you expect Him to preserve your life in your rebellion against Him?
17	When you help the poor, you are lending to the Lord – and He pays wonderful interest on your loan!	Helping the poor pays dividends from the Lord. If you refuse Proverbs 21:13 applies; He who shuts his ears to the cries of the poor will be ignored in his own time of need.
18	Discipline your son in his early years while there is hope. If you don't you will ruin his life.	If God says to discipline your child, then you are in rebellion against God if you don't obey His instructions. The result as predicted will be a ruined life, because God cannot bless anything which goes against His word.
19	A short-tempered man must bear his own penalty; you can't do much to help him. If you try once you must try a dozen times.	Most short-tempered men are also unteachable. Therefore, no matter how much you try, they rarely change their ways, unless the Holy Spirit works on their insides.

20	Get all the advice you can, and be wise the rest of your life.	As you get older you should be getting wiser. That is the indicator of spiritual maturity.
21	Man proposes, God disposes.	Despite what man designs and proposes (no matter how good it may seem at the time), if it is not part of God's plan for your life, then it will not succeed. God's ways are always perfect, because His ways are higher than our ways, and let's face it —He is wiser than we are!!!
22	Kindness makes a man attractive. And it is better to be poor than be dishonest.	God raises up the kind and the humble, and this is recognised by others. Righteousness exalts a nation, and God will bless you, even if you are poor in wealth, you will be rich in spirit. Dishonest people are never rich in spirit, nor are they happy, because they are always worrying that somebody will steal their dishonest wealth.
23	Reverence for God gives life, happiness and protection from harm	The reverential fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Wise people have extended lives, they are happier and have God's protection, but people who do not have reverence of the Lord are always in trouble.
24	Some men are so lazy they won't even feed themselves.	If they don't have a considerate helper, they die an early death.
25	Punish a mocker and others will learn from his example. Reprove a wised man and he shall become wiser.	That is why sometimes punishment is necessary for wrongdoing, not only for the person who did wrong, but as an example to the whole group, so they don't make the same mistake and therefore suffer the same consequences.
26	A son who mistreats his father or mother is a public disgrace.	Unfortunately, this is not taught in our schools anymore, and as a result sons and daughters are falling by the wayside, in some cases without any chance of a way back to salvation.
27	Stop listening to teachings that contradicts what you know (in your heart) to be right	The scriptures tell us that in the last days there will be a falling away and that many will be deceived by wrong teachings, which sound too good to be true. Pastors and teachers will produce sermons which tickle the ears of the hearers, not correct them with Bible-based instruction. Therefore as Apostle Paul warned, test everything you hear and make sure it lines up with the Gospel message. If it does not it must be rejected.
28	A worthless witness cares nothing for the truth – he enjoys his sinning too much	The commandments are clear; thou shall not bear false witness, because in God's eyes it is a sin. We know from Romans, that the wages of sin is death, but salvation comes through the blood of Jesus Christ, which leads us to eternal life.

29	Mockers and rebels shall be severely punished	The scripture tells us that we cannot mock God and think we can get away with it. God's grace and mercy flows, but then comes the judgement, and mockers and rebels against God will not escape His fury.

CHAPTER 32: PROVERBS CHAPTER 20

Verse #	Verse	Comment
1	Wine gives false courage; hard liquor leads to brawls; what fools men are to let it master them, making them reel drunkenly down the street	More and more evidence is emerging, that alcohol is directly linked to violence, as the alcohol activates parts of the brain, which normally is under control. Violence comes from the evil one, not from God. Only fools, let the evil one, take control of your body, through alcohol.
2	The king's fury is like that of a roaring lion; to rouse his anger is to risk your life.	Kings and people in leadership have power which can be released in an instant; but when it is released the person who is responsible could lose their lives. There is power over life and death in the tongue. A wise man knows when to keep his mouth shut and protect his life.
3	It is an honour for a man to stay out of a fight. Only fools insist on quarrelling.	It is easier sometimes to get into a fight than to stay out of it. To stay out of a fight requires courage and the knowledge that what you are doing is for the good of all.
4	If you won't plough in the cold, you won't eat at the harvest.	Ploughing is necessary to prepare the ground for the seeds to be planted and is usually done in the winter months, so the land can lay fallow during the cold months, killing any weeds and preparing the ground to receive the seeds in spring for the harvest. If you are not prepared to suffer the cold to prepare the soil, then God cannot bless your fields with a good harvest.
5	Though good advice lies deep within a counsellor's heart, the wise man will draw it out.	A counsellor is not there to tell you what to do, but to advise you of possible options for the specific situation you are facing. The wise man is a person who uses his skills to extract the right advice from the counsellor and then be able to apply it to the situation for God's glory.
6	Most people will tell you what loyal friends they are, but are they telling the truth?	The test of who your real friends are comes when there is a crisis in your life. Real friends don't judge you; they just jump in and help you through the mess and bring you out the other side, still remaining the friendship and in fact making the friendship stronger.

7	It is a wonderful heritage to have an honest father.	In today's society many people would say that it is wonderful to have a father, with so many single parent families trying to raise their children. But this statement goes further than that. You can have a dishonest father, which causes grief, hurt, even hatred and it is not a heritage that you would want to pass onto your children. But an honest father is someone you are happy to leave in charge of your children, knowing that they will be loved, cherished and protected.
8	A king sitting as judge weighs all the evidence carefully, distinguishing the true from the false.	The Bible makes many mentions of righteous judges, people who look behind the scenes to deliberate carefully on the evidence to determine a righteous and just verdict. When King Solomon ordered that the baby by cut in half by the sword, he had no intention of hurting the child, but he was watching for the reaction of the two women who claimed that the baby was hers. The real mother was prepared to give up her rights to the child, so that it would not be harmed, she loved her child so much. As a result, she was awarded custody of her baby.
9	Who can ever say, "I have cleansed my heart; I am sinless"?	The scripture tells us that any person who thinks he is sinless is a fool and the Spirit of God is not in Him. We all are sinful and it is only through the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ that we can remain cleansed, by confessing our sins and asking Jesus to forgive us our sins on a daily basis.
10	The Lord despises every kind of cheating.	In today's society, the line between right and wrong is so blurred that people do not realise that what they are doing is in fact wrong, that cheating is a sin. Yes; they understand that cheating on an examination is wrong, but going 61 kms an hour in a 60 zone is not cheating, it is only 1 Km over the speed limit, so that is ok, when in fact it is not ok, it is a sin, just like cheating on the exam paper.
11	The character of even a child can be known by the way he acts – whether what he does is pure and right.	The scripture tells us to bring up a child in the things of God and he will not depart from this righteous path. What he says or does reflects directly back to the parents who taught him.
12	If you have good eyesight and good hearing, than God who gave them to you.	God created you in His image. Be thankful that he has given you good eyesight to see His beautiful creation, and good hearing to hear the praises of the birds and animals which God also created to be living on this earth with us, for His glory.
13	If you love sleep, you will end in poverty. Stay awake, work hard, and there will be plenty to eat!	God gave us sleep as a way to refresh our bodies, but too much sleep is a clear sign of laziness. God commanded us to wake up out of our sleep and to seek His face and His righteousness, so that all things can be added unto us.

14	"Utterly worthless"! says a buyer as he haggles over the price. But afterwards he brags about his bargain!	So, the ~~questions~~: Was the buyer lying when he stated that the object was ~~utterly~~ worthless? Was he trying to cheat the shop owner by offering a low price? ~~Why did he then brag about his purchase? Who will God bless in this encounter? The buyer, or the shop owner?~~
~~15~~	~~Good sense is far more valuable than gold or precious jewels.~~	~~Good sense is of spiritual value, whereas, gold and precious jewels have only worldly value and you cannot take them to heaven with you.~~
~~16~~	~~It is risky to make loans to strangers.~~	~~Why? Because you have no knowledge that they intend to pay back the loan, which will cause you a loss of income and also you will be seen as a fool, not a wise man. In these situations good sense must always prevail.~~
~~17~~	~~Some men enjoy cheating, but the cake they buy with their ill-gotten gains will turn to gravel in their mouths.~~	~~The produce you buy with ill-gotten gains never tastes as sweet as the produce purchased from the money you received from good honest work. This is why many rich people are never satisfied.~~
18	Don't go ahead with your plans without the advice of others; don't go to war until they agree.	All of your plans are "supposed to be" ordered by the Lord. Make sure that you discuss these plans with other like-minded people and then if they agree, you can proceed. Remember that if your plans are "ordered by the Lord" you are in fact going to war against the enemy, because your plans are to take back territory in some form or other.
19	Don't tell your secrets to a gossip unless you want them broadcast to the world	Secrets are things that are precious, to be kept hidden, from the world, unless God wants it broadcast, then tell it to a gossip, as they cannot resist to tell others the secret news.
20	God puts out the light of a man who curses his father or mother.	The scripture tells us to honour our father and our mother and we will be rewarded with an extended life. On the other hand, if we curse our father or our mother God has promised to promptly terminate our lives.
21	A fortune can be made from cheating; but there is a curse that goes with it.	God proclaims that there will be blessings and curses for those who follow Him. Here is a case when getting rich by illegal means result in a curse being placed upon the fortune, hence it will never be a blessing to the owner.
22	Don't repay evil for evil. Wait for the Lord to handle the matter.	We are commanded to repay evil with good, to love on the evil doer. We are not to judge them, that is God's job and He will do it in His own way and in His own time.
23	The Lord loathes all cheating and all dishonesty.	If it is not honest and righteous, God cannot bless it, because He will not go against His own word.
24	Since the Lord is directing our steps, why try to understand everything that is happening along the way?	1 Corinthians 10:13 says that the Lord will never test you beyond your level of faith and He will show you a way out of all trails and situations. These issues are brought into our lives for the sole reason of teaching us to trust Him more, not to harm us.

25	It is rash to make a promise to the Lord before counting the cost.	People make emotional pledges at the front of churches to accept Jesus as their saviour and to follow His teachings, without counting the cost of that decision. Yes, it is wonderful to accept Jesus Christ as your saviour, and to pledge the rest of your life to Him, but many fall away, when they realise that this requires them to change their lifestyles, their friends, and their direction in life, as they come to feel the presence of God, leading them in the direction he has called them to follow.
26	A wise king stamps out crime by severe punishment	If people know in advance that they will die if they commit certain crimes, they will be more reluctant to go ahead and do them. Today's society has gone soft on crime and criminals know that today they will get a slap on the wrist, 100 hours of community service (which they don't have to do) and they are back on the streets again. There is no real deterrent so they continue to commit crimes.
27	A man's conscience (his spirit) is the Lord's searchlight exposing his hidden motives.	A man's conscience exposes the hidden motives behind his actions. Even if the actions may seem commendable, God knows the intentions of His heart, which is exposed by his spirit.
28	If a king is kind, honest and fair, his kingdom stands secure.	History shows that harsh kings produce fear in their subjects and plots to overthrow them. Honest, fair kings are rewarded by the Lord and their kingdoms have sustained peace and justice.
29	The glory of young men is in their strength; of old men their experiences.	Young men rush into situations and waste their energy, their strength and their glory; but old men are wiser, use their experience and search out the weaknesses before they attack.
30	Punishment that hurts chases evil from the heart.	God chastises those He loves, and it can sometimes hurt as we are going through the process, but it is cleansing the evil from our hearts.

CHAPTER 33: PSALM 64

A Psalm to the Chief Musician, written by King David

Verse 1: To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David. Hear my voice, O God, in my prayer: preserve my life from fear of the enemy.

"Hear" [שָׁמַע shâmaʿ *shaw-mah'*]: To listen intently to my voice. King David is crying out to God, pleading that God listens intently to what he wants to say – not just idle listening with half an ear – but with God's full attention.

"Preserve" [נָצַר nâtsar *naw-tsar'*] To preserve or protect my life from (my own) fear of the enemy.

- We know from the New Testament scriptures that "Faith" casts out "Fear", so David is really asking God to increase his faith, so that his own fear will be overcome.
- David did not ask God to protect him from his enemies – but to protect him from his own fear of his enemies. David realised that if he can overcome his own fear, then the enemy will already be defeated.

Verse 2: Hide me from the secret counsel of the wicked; from the insurrection of the workers of iniquity

The Peshitta translation from the original Aramaic says: *"Hide me from the wickedness of the evil one; from the corruption of the workers of iniquity"*

- [סוֹד sôd *sode*]: "to hide", to conceal, to cover me from the secret counsel of the wicked;
- David pleads to be hidden from the wickedness of the evil one (Satan) from the corruption of the wicked.
- [Living in Pakistan, you have first hand knowledge of corruption, but what the people may not realise is that God considers them to be wicked, and as such they are not worthy to enter into heaven **unless they cry out for forgiveness, change from their wicked ways, seek God's face and pray.** ONLY THEN, will God hear from heaven and heal their land.]

Verse 3: Who whet their tongue like a sword, and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words: Therefore a better translation is: Who sharpen their tongues like a sword (so it can pierce, prick the innocent).

- שָׁנַן shânan *shaw-nan'* A primitive root; to *point* (transitively or intransitively); intensively to *pierce*; figuratively to *inculcate:*—prick, sharp (-en), teach diligently, **whet.**

Remember that you can do much damage by what you say against others, that is why God tells us to control our tongues.

Verse 4: That they may shoot in secret at the perfect: suddenly do they shoot at him, and fear not.

- David is complaining to God that they shoot their wicked tongues at the innocent ones, and the wicked have no fear, because they have strayed so far away from God, they have all sense of right or wrong.

Verse 5: They encourage themselves in an evil matter: they commune of laying snares privily; they say, Who shall see them?

Verse 6: They search out iniquities; they accomplish a diligent search: both the inward thought of every one of them, and the heart, is deep.

Verse 7: But God shall shoot at them with an arrow; suddenly shall they be wounded. So they shall make their own tongue to fall upon themselves: all that see them shall fleeqv://steplinkto3 40/389/Strong's Dictionary/Hebrew Words/H5000's/H5074 away.

- They consider that they are immune to punishment, because they do all this in secret; but they forget what the Lord says: They that sin in private shall have their sins exposed into the public; so, everybody will know.
- God does not ignore the sins of the evil doers; they shall have to meet their maker and give an account for their actions – both seen and unseen.

Verse 8 So they shall make their own tongue to fall upon themselves: all that see them shall flee away.

- God shall use their own tongues to judge them and they shall flee away in shame.

Verse 9: And all men shall fear, and shall declare the work of God; for they shall wisely consider of his doing:

- Then shall all men understand and reverently fear God for His wisdom and solemn counsel.

Verse 10: The righteous shall be glad in the LORD, and shall trust in him; and all the upright in heart shall glory.

- When the innocent ones see how God deals with the corrupt ones they will be glad and worship and glorify His name, for He is a righteous, holy and wise God, who never betrays the trust of His children.

CHAPTER 34: PUT ON THE WHOLE ARMOUR OF GOD

Introduction:

In Ephesians chapter 6, Apostle Paul, writing from prison, encourages the followers of Jesus Christ to put on the full armour of God.

It may well have been that he had his own personal guard, being a Roman Citizen, so many Western Theologians assume that Paul is referring to the Roman Soldier's armour when he describes this section of scripture ~ but that is not the case, if you study it in detail.

Paul did not tell the Christian believers to put on **"physical armour"**, but he was referring to **"the spiritual armour of God Almighty"**.

So let us dive in with both feet and see what the scriptures really say in this section.

Christian Warfare:

From giving advice to families, fathers, mothers and their children, and then focusing on the relationships between Servants and their Masters, Apostle Paul now turns his attention to the problems which exists at the time of writing this Epistle, and prophetically, to future times of oppression, and severe persecution, which was to follow.

From verse 10 onwards, Paul is now addressing the whole Christian community, and He speaks of an **"external enemy",** from whom assaults are to be expected, unfolding and explaining the equipment that ***"every individual Christian"*** **should have**, to meet these inevitable assaults, which are to come upon them.

Christian Husbands, wives, children, parents, servants, and masters, are all involved in this warfare, because each one has his own particular part to play in this warfare. Each and every individual, who calls himself/herself a Christian, are all to be involved in this warfare.

Each has his own part to play, and his/her duty to perform. **This is NOT OPTIONAL!**

Thus, at its close, the Epistle returns to the thought of Divine Power in men, which was emphasized at the beginning.

[NLT] V 10: *Last of all, I want to remind you that your strength must come from the Lord's mighty power within you.* The **"present tense"** in **"your strength"** points not to a need for getting new strength, but to the revelation of using the strength that is already within you, through the union we have with Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit.

[NLT] V 11: ***PUT ON ALL OF GOD'S ARMOUR*** *so that you will be able to stand safe against all strategies and tricks of Satan.*

The word **"whole"** is not found in the original texts, and its insertion by English translators obscures the real sense of meaning of what Paul is trying to say.

Paul is saying that we each have to put on God's **"panoply"**.

"Panoply" means **"the whole armour"**, but the emphasis of the original text rests with that fact that it is **"God's Armour"** that we are to put on ~ **not physical armour**, like that of the Roman soldiers.

The need for God's panoply is indicated in the phrase ***the wiles of the devil***, the methods and stratagems of the evil one, who **"carries on a campaign"** against the souls of men. [See 1 Peter 2:11].

There is an emphasis on the personal pronoun **"we"** at the beginning of verse 12 that distinguishes this conflict, in which Christians are engaged, from the common physical violence of men.

Paul assumes that the "Christian life" is understood by his readers, and that it is a life of continual conflict: his concern is to stress that it is not a **physical struggle, but a spiritual struggle.**

The enemies of the soul are not earthly forces, (they are not carnal), nor are they beings on a level with man, but are the leaders of the evil spiritual forces of the whole universe.

This is the thought, which must inspire Christians to the highest and most urgent efforts. [We have to get our priorities right].

We have been warned, but unfortunately, all too few have recognised, and acted upon this warning. If such is indeed that state of affairs, and the soul and affairs of mankind are open to such subtle and violent assaults, then it is little wonder that the world tosses in

torment; for comparatively few have fitted themselves with **"the whole armour of God Almighty"**, to resist the assaults of the evil one.

In verse 13, a **second fundamental fact** is laid out before us. The **first fundamental fact** was that our warfare is spiritual; the second, that for such a warfare, spiritual weapons are essential; and without them, there can be no hope of withstanding the powers of evil. In this sphere of warfare, atom bombs are of no more value than bows and arrows.

Paul's picture seems to be that of defenders resisting assault, (V 14) but some commentators have suggested that his description, is one of the forces of Christ's Church advancing against the powers of evil; BUT, this hardly seems to be under consideration here.

The ***figure*** that Paul adopts was familiar with those acquainted with the Old Testament. **IT OCCURS IN TWO PASSAGES IN THE BOOK OF ISAIAH**. [See Isaiah 11: 5 and Isaiah 54:17]

This is why it is so important for Western Christians to study & know the Old Testament; otherwise, you will miss significant messages and meanings in the New Testament Epistles.

Isaiah 11:5 says; *for He will be clothed with fairness and with truth.*

Isaiah 54:17 says; *but in that coming day, no weapon turned against you shall succeed, and you will have justice against every courtroom lie. This is the heritage I have given you, says the Lord.*

Guided by the Holy Spirit, Paul boldly applies these passages, which in the Old Testament refer to the Messiah, to those who are "in Christ Jesus".

It is a strange paradox that the Messiah, ***the gospel of peace*** (V 15) should be part of the Christian's panoply of war, but it is clearly the case.

The relation of this gospel to the feet might seem strange to some in our modern day thinking, but it finds its illustration (and probably its origin) in Isaiah 52:7. [Compare it with Romans 10:15]

Isaiah 52:7 says; *how beautiful upon the mountain are the feet of him who brings good news of peace and salvation, the news that the God of Israel reigns.*

Romans 10:15 says; *and how will anyone go and tell them, unless someone sends them? That is what the scripture are talking about when they say, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace with God and bring glad tidings of good things." In other words, how welcome are those who come preaching God's Good News!*

Verse 16; explains the ***"shield of faith"***. Of the two shields used in warfare, the reference here is to the larger, heavier shield, intended to protect the whole body, from weapons of the enemy. This means that the fullest protection is needed, and it is available to all Christians, **because it dwells within you**!

"The fiery darts" referred to in (V 16). It is an expression of the deadly harm that can come from the assaults from Satan. These are not small darts like we use on a dart board. These are giant spiritual spears, which can severely wound or even cause death, in an unwary Christian, who has gone into battle unprotected by God's Holy Spirit armour.

It was known that giant spears could pierce the armour worn by Roman soldiers, so using this **"physical armour"** would not protect a Christian from a **"spiritual attack"**.

"The helmet of salvation" (V 17) comes from Isaiah 54:17 which says; *but in that coming day, no weapon turned against you shall succeed, and you will have justice against every courtroom lie. This is the heritage I have given you, says the Lord.*

As Jesus Christ was clad for his warfare, so is the Christian to be arrayed for his. [See Isaiah 11:3-5, which says; *His delight will be obedience to the Lord. He will not judge by appearance, false evidence, or hearsay, but will defend the poor and the exploited. He will rule against the wicked who oppress them. For he will be clothed with fairness, and with truth.* **This is the source of the second figure in the verse.**

For the word **"breath"** in the passage in Isaiah, we may equally well (or better) read **'Spirit'**; thus, we have 'and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the Spirit of his lips shall he slay the wicked. [See also Revelation 1:16, which says: *He held 7 stars in his right hand and a sharp, double-bladed sword in his mouth, and his face shone like the power of the sun in unclouded brilliance.*] Also, Revelation 19:15, which

says; *in his mouth he held a sharp sword to strike down the nations, he ruled them with an iron grip; and he trod the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God.*

This also applies to the same figure used by Paul. Here is the one weapon in the offence in the Christian "panoply", ***the word of God,*** and it is the power of the Holy Spirit. This power, the Christian is to use, with complete faith in its virtues.

The word and prayer (see verse 18) are linked together in the purposes of God, and are always to be used in conjunction with each other. **Both are needed in this warfare;** our words to God, and God's words to the enemy.

PRAYER IS NOT TO BE ONLY THE OCCASIONAL EXERCISE OF THE SOUL, but the Christian is to pray **ALWAYS**, that is, on all occasions, and in respect to everything; and in all things we are to consult the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We are to pray not for ourselves alone, **but for all of the saints,** and to that end are to be wakeful and alert amid the temptations of sloth and sleep.

Therefore, do not be caught napping when the enemy comes to deceive, rob, kill and destroy. God has already given us the power through the Holy Spirit to defeat the wiles of the enemy. But this can only happen when;

We know that we have the power of the Holy Spirit, living inside of us. That we can use this power to defeat the enemy, in all of his attempts to steal people back into his kingdom of darkness. We must not only **"know the word of God"**, we must also **"understand the meaning of the words of God"**, so that we can use it effectively, to destroy the works of the enemy.

CHAPTER 35: RECLAIMING YOUR HERITAGE

In Old Testament times we have heard Pastors speak about how important it was for people to hear from God, and be obedient to His voice.

We have looked at several people including:

Abraham: A person who had to cut all his ties with his own family, his country of birth, and his culture, and go to a place that only God would show him. As a result of his obedience to God's word, he became the father of many nations – that is the heritage of Abraham.

Noah; On the other hand, Noah heard from God, and worked for the next 120 years with his sons, building an ark.

After working for 120 years, to build this ark, and to catch and feed all the different types of animals, he only saved 8 people.

But you see, if Noah did not hear from God, or heard and become complacent, or lazy, and did not complete his Godly appointed task, mankind, as we know it today, would have become extinct.

Yes, God could have raised up another person to do this, but God does not have a "Plan B". His plans are perfect in all its ways.

The heritage of Noah is that he was the beginning of the new generation after the flood; the beginning of the righteous ones.

Unfortunately, Satan was not killed in the flood, so it was not very long until sin again came into the world, and became an ever-increasing problem to mankind. As a result of sin, God had to set an example to all of mankind.

We know that through **Pharaoh's dreams** and **Joseph's interpretations of those dreams**, God was able to prepare the nation of Egypt, to save grain from the plentiful 7 years of harvest, and prepare themselves for the 7 lean years.

Also, it made Egypt a mighty nation, so that all the nations of the then known world, had to come to Egypt to buy grain.

Sometimes God works swiftly and other times God takes several generations to implement His plans.

When God decided to select a people to show His power and His glory on earth, He could have selected any tribe or race on earth.

He could have selected the Pigmies of Africa, the Red Indians of North America, or even the aborigines of Australia. He created them all. He could have chosen any of them.

He selected the Jewish people, but there was nothing special about them.

They were not mighty warriors; They were not more obedient, than any other tribe or nation.

They were not higher or lower than any other tribe – they were just "set apart", so that by their example and their exploits, people of all tribes, and from all nations, could see what happens when God Almighty comes into the midst of His chosen people.

In this instance, it was going to take 400 years to raise up the Jewish people, into a large group (estimates say about 3 million people) before God acted and **sent Moses back into Egypt**, to command Pharaoh to "Let my people Go".

As a result of Moses hearing from God, and being obedient to that calling on his life, the greatest nation on earth at that time, was brought to its knees.

Its armies were totally defeated by God's miracles, and the nation of Israel walked on dry ground, across the Red Sea, out of Egypt and slavery, into the wilderness and God's promises.

Throughout the rest of the Old Testament, prophets and kings reminded the Jewish nation of their heritage and where they had come from.

They were continually reminded, of the miracles and protection, that God Almighty had given to them.

They were reminded that God promised them a land which flowed with milk and honey, and that God delivered on that promise to them.

When they were disobedient to God's laws, God allowed them to suffer trials and tribulations, even to being captured and sent to Babylon for seventy years, to teach them a lesson.

Even while they were in Babylon for 70 years, they yearned to go back to Jerusalem, to go back, and reclaim their heritage, to re-establish their domicile in the promised land.

Even when they were disobedient to God, deep down in their hearts, they knew that Jerusalem was where they belonged. They knew that the only place that they would find peace within their souls, would be back under the covering of God's covenant.

Through the prophet Isaiah, they knew that there was a Messiah coming, and that He would be their saviour.

Through King David, this was confirmed in many of his Psalms and he gave us picture windows, about the Lord and His mighty works within us.

Through Jeremiah, 31:31 they knew that there would be a new covenant.

No longer would it be a covenant of words, written on stone tablets, but it would be a covenant which would be written by the Holy Spirit within us. It would be a covenant written on their hearts.

They waited expectantly for the Messiah to come – but unfortunately when He did come, many did not recognise Him, because He was not what they expected.

As a result of their disbelief, God raised up prophets and teachers to go as missionaries, to the Gentiles, to tell them about Jesus Christ, so that through a period of 2000 years, nations around the world, would hear the good news of salvation, and be given the opportunity to turn to Christ and receive an everlasting blood covering for their sins.

Now, it does not matter, whether God told you, or your descendants to come to this nation, or whether an English judge told your relatives to come here in chains, or whether you fled the persecution of the Nazis, the communists, or the evils of poverty, you are now in this country, because God has a plan for your life, right here and now!

Many prophecies have been given over this nation, stating that the last great revival of the world will start and emanate from Australia.

The heritage of Israel was in the past. The heritage of Australia is not in our past, but in our future.

God chose an insignificant group of Jewish people in the Old Testament to bring the mighty nation of Egypt to its knees.

God has chosen us, an insignificant nation of 23 million people, out of over 6 billion people, to bring His glory to a climax in the future, before He returns to claim His kingdom.

<u>This is to be the last revival</u> BEFORE HE RETURNS.

For that to happen we must be prepared to claim our heritage – to claim our destiny, and be ready to act on God's word, when we read it, when we hear it, or when we perceive, it through the Holy Spirit.

This prophecy will not be fulfilled, if we continue to act as a "she'll be right mate", type of church.

For this to happen, signs, wonders and miracles, must become a "normal thing" to occur, when Christians come together to worship and to glorify God.

People outside the church, must see that we are different, and that what we say, is actually what we do, in all situations. [POLITICIANS take note.]

The result of our witness must make people want to become Christians.

No longer, is it acceptable for there to be a service without people getting saved!

No longer, is it acceptable for there to be disunity, within the church!

The scripture says that where there is unity God commands a blessing!

God wants to issue this command, all the time to His church, but unfortunately, we get in the way and hinder His actions;

by our rebellion,

by our disunity,

by our jealousy,

and by our pride.

Unless we change our ways, by continually renewing our minds and our values, this will not happen!

Unless we are prepared to listen and act upon God's word, we will be cast aside!

Right throughout all of God's history, the opportunity for people to hear God's voice and to act upon it, has been available to mankind.

Whenever a people refuse to listen and harden their hearts, God raises up someone else to take over God's vision and implement it. For example:

God raised up Saul to be a mighty King, but Saul was disobedient to God's commands, and through the prophet Samuel, God raised up David to take his place.

As a result of Saul's disobedience, the kingdom was torn from his family and they were lost forever.

The scripture says that each of us has been called by name and called according to God's Divine plan and His Divine purpose.

We each have a choice to make – just like King Saul.

We can listen to the word of the Lord, recognise His voice and act upon it, or we can turn aside, and follow after other voices and ignore God's voice completely.

We have 2 choices with 2 different results.

If we chose Christ and follow His commandments, we will be part of His plan, to prepare this nation, for the task that God has already indicated through His prophets, that we will start a revival here in Australia, which will go to all parts of the earth.

Or, we can choose to stay stagnant, stay comfortable, wrapped up in our own little thoughts, and in our own reasoning, that we can't possibly do this impossible task.

Today, I am challenging you to make a choice, just like Joshua challenged the Jewish nation many centuries before:

In the Living Bible in Joshua 24:14-15 it says: *So, revere Jehovah and serve only Him, in sincerity and in truth. Put away forever the idols which your ancestors worshipped when they lived beyond the Euphrates River, and in Egypt. Worship the Lord alone. [Worship only Him]. But if you are unwilling to obey the Lord, then decide today who you will obey. Will it be the gods of your ancestors beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, here in this land? But as for me and my household we will serve the Lord".*

Today God is issuing you with a challenge from His divine word.

Today you must make a choice.

Will you follow after God Almighty and obey Him?

Or will you choose to follow after someone else?

God's word says that you cannot serve 2 masters. You will love one and hate the other.

You can have only one master. Who is it going to be?

If you have never made a decision to follow after Jesus Christ, today, right now you have that opportunity. Come to the front of the church and we will pray for you, and with you, as you make this important step in your life.

Today, if you don't choose Christ, you are in fact rejecting Him.

Today, if you don't make a decision, you are also rejecting Him.

Today is crunch time, for each and everyone in this house.

Today, when you leave this place, you must know in your heart who is your master and who it is that you have proclaimed you are going to serve.

Today I want to make this an opportunity for all those who choose to serve our Living God to stand up in their places and make a public statement, a public confession of their commitment to follow after the Lord.

Please repeat after me:

"Dear Heavenly Father, we have heard your message today, from your divine word and we confess that these words are true. We confess that we can only serve one master and today we confess that we will choose to serve you and you alone. Heavenly Father, we ask that you attune our spiritual ears to hear your voice, whenever you speak to us. Prompt our spirits to recognise your voice and through your Holy Spirit empower us to act upon the words we have received from you, without fear, - and ignoring the circumstances around us. Give us all a desire to learn more from your word and for each of us to listen to, and hear your voice. May we be the beginning of a renewal within the churches here in Toowoomba and a revival right across this nation. I ask this prayer in the mighty name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

CHAPTER 36:RECOVERING THE BIBLICAL BORDERS OF ISRAEL

While the world has been glued to the TV, or their social media sites over the last 3 weeks, arguing about who owns what land, and who started the latest conflict between Hamas and Israel, and that there should be a **"TWO STATE SOLUTION",** there has been no mention about what the Bible says, about **"the Biblical Boundaries of Israel" ~ "THE PROMISED LAND."**

The Bible clearly lays out the Biblical Boundaries of Israel, and maybe the World Leaders and the United Nations needs to carefully look at them, because there are warnings for nations that do not follow them, and God Almighty **has promised to severely punish any nation that has "stolen land for the nation of Israel".**

There are also promises for punishment, for any nation, which supports nations, that have stolen land from Israel as well.

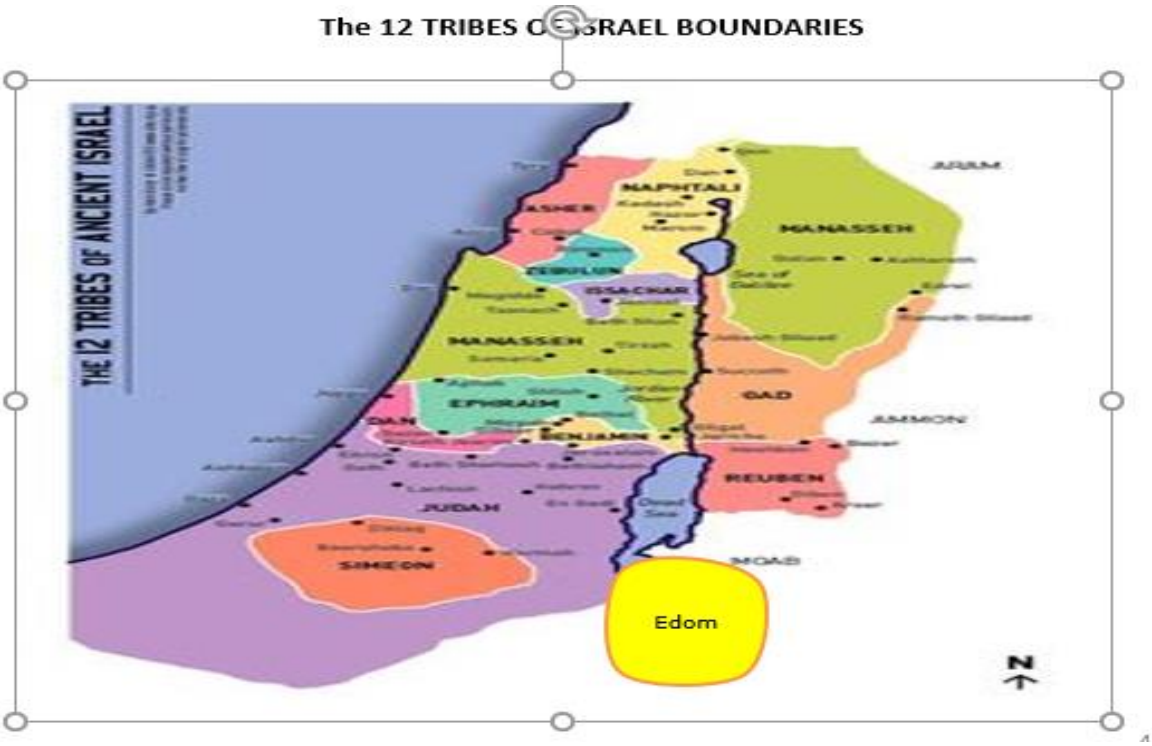
In Genesis 15:18 and in 17:8 God Almighty gives the boundaries for the Nation of Israel, known as the Promised Land.

Over time, and because of their disobedience, these borders have been significantly reduced, as neighboring nations have stolen land, and now even complete nations are dwelling within the **"original Biblical Borders of Israel".**

The borders referred to are:

1. Dan is described in the Bible as the northernmost city of the Kingdom of Israel
2. Be'er Sheva is described in the Bible as the southernmost city settled by the Israelites. Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov all spent time in Be'er Sheva
3. The Nile River is Egypt's primary source of water. At the beginning of the Israelite's slavery in Egypt, Pharaoh commanded that all baby boys be thrown into the Nile (Exodus 1:22), and baby Moshe was placed in the Nile (Exodus 2:3) and drawn from the Nile (Exodus 2:5) when he could no longer be hidden from the Egyptians. The first two plagues the God brought upon the Egyptians also began in the Nile (Exodus 7:14-24), Exodus (7:26-8:11).
4. The Euphrates River is the longest river of Western Asia, and is one of the two defining rivers of Mesopotamia. According to the Bible, the Euphrates was one of four rivers whose source was a river flowing from the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:14).
5. In the Book of Ezekiel chapters 35 & 36 God Almighty tells the Prophet that he has not forgotten His promises to Abraham, and that He will destroy the nations who attacked Israel and stole their land.
6. These nations are all destined to be destroyed completely, and their cities left as rubble, whilst the Nation of Israel will expand and the land will be turned from desert into a beautiful orchard, with a bountiful harvest.

7. However, **there is within these 2 chapters a warning for all the nations upon the earth**. **Any nation which mocks Israel, or aids a nation which mocks Israel, shall be severely dealt with by the Lord.**
8. So let us look at these subject chapters in detail.
9. The next picture shows the 12 Tribes of Israel and their boundaries. REMEMBER, THESE ARE "THE BIBLICAL BOUNDARIES OF ISRAEL" – NOT THE BORDERS TODAY & THESE ARE THE BOUNDARIES THAT WILL BE RESTORED.



Now we know that God Almighty also promised to restore the nation of Israel in one day.
Isaiah 66:7-8: Before going into labour, she gave birth: before her pains came, she delivered a male child. Whoever heard of such a thing? Who has ever seen such a thing? Is a country born in one day? Is a nation brought forth all at once? For as soon as Tziyon went into labour, she brought forth her children. [Stern's Complete Jewish Bible]
That prophesy came to pass on the 14th May 1948, some 73 years ago.

Amos 9:11-15: [New King James Version]: Israel Will Be Restored

11 "On that day I will raise up The [a]tabernacle of David, which has fallen down,
And [b]repair its damages; I will raise up its ruins, And rebuild it as in the days of old;
12 That they may possess the remnant of Edom,[c] And all the Gentiles who are called by
My name," Says the LORD who does this thing.
13 "Behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "When the ploughman shall overtake the
reaper, And the treader of grapes him who sows seed; The mountains shall drip with sweet
wine, And, all the hills shall flow *with it.*
14 I will bring back the captives of My people Israel; They shall build the waste cities and
inhabit *them;* They shall plant vineyards and drink wine from them; They shall also make
gardens and eat fruit from them.
15 I will plant them in their land, And, no longer shall they be pulled up from the land I
have given them," says the LORD your God.

It is exciting as this prophecy is yet to be fulfilled, but it will happen, because God Almighty never, ever, breaks His promises.

CHAPTER 37: REJECTING GOD'S TEMPLATE

In Ephesians Chapter 4, Apostle Paul, through the revelation of the Holy Spirit, reveals to the Body of Christ, the Christ's template for the growth of the Body of Christ, through the ages, until Jesus Christ returns to collect His pure, holy, and perfect bride.
But recently, (over the last ten years or so), I have seen evidence that more and more churches, are steering away from this God given template, ***"to do their own thing"!***

Ephesians 4:8 **Wherefore He said: When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and *He gave gifts* unto men."**

Now my first question: **Who gave gifts to men?**

- Was it the Pope? No!
- Was it the Archbishop of Canterbury? No!
- Was it the head of any denomination? NO!!!

It is clear that it was Jesus Christ who ascended; and it was Jesus Christ, who gave the gifts to men (mankind), and that these gifts are empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Now my second question: **What were these gifts given to men?**

Ephesians 4:11 reveals the answer: *And He gave some, **Apostles,** and some **Prophets'** and some **Evangelists;** and some **Pastors,** and **Teachers.***

These are the **"gifts"** that Jesus gave to the Body of Christ (mankind).

Now my third question: Why were these "gifts" given to the Body of Christ?

1. For the perfecting of the saints,
2. For the work of the ministry,
3. For the edifying of the Body of Christ,
4. Till we **ALL COME** into the **UNITY OF THE FAITH,**
5. And of the (complete) knowledge of the Son of God,
6. Unto a **Perfect Man,**
7. Unto the measure of the stature of the **FULLNESS OF CHRIST.**

As a result of achieving these 7 states of **"increased maturity,"** we can then progress to verses 14-15, which states:
***That we henceforth be no more (spiritual) children**, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lay in wait to deceive; **BUT** speaking truth in love, **may grow up into Him in all things,** which is the head, even Christ.*

Now, I have heard pastors state that these gifts no longer apply to the Body of Christ today.
I have also heard other pastors state that if **"these people"** are not appointed to the church, by their governing bodies, then they won't recognise them.
I asked one of the Lutheran pastors who stated this, could he please tell me which governing body "appointed Martin Luther" to start the Lutheran church?
I stated the obvious: It was not the "Catholic Church" because they kicked him out. It wasn't the Lutheran church – because at that time it did not exist – until He created it. So who "appointed Him"?
He had to admit, that it was the Holy Spirit who urged him to suffer the trials, risk his own life for the gospel, and to start the Lutheran church.
I then went on to ask him who appointed Paul to be an Apostle?

1. Was it the original 11 disciples who walked with Jesus? NO
2. Was it the new disciple appointed in the place of Judas? NO
3. Was it James, who was the senior pastor of the church in Jerusalem? NO.
4. Then who was it?

- **It was Jesus (Himself), who met Saul on the road to Damascus.**
- **It was Jesus Himself, who revealed to him what he had to do.**
- **It was the Holy Spirit, who re-trained him, during his 4 years in the Arabian desert.**

So, my next question blew his socks off.
Do you recognise the authority and the teaching of Apostle Paul's in his Epistles? "Of course," he replied.
But I thought I heard you just say that if "our governing body does not appoint the Apostles, you will not recognise them". Don't you realise it is the same Holy Spirit who appointed Paul to be an Apostle, who continues to appoint Apostles to the Body of Christ today?
It is the same Holy Spirit, who you rely upon, to give you the power to heal people, to pray for them, to guide them, as their shepherd.
If you refuse to believe that the 5-fold ministries are for today, <u>then you must accept that the following is **ALREADY TRUE IN YOUR CHURCH**</u>

For the perfecting of the saints	You must be able to proclaim that **ALL THE SAINTS IN YOUR CHURCH ARE PERFECT!**
For the work of the ministry	You must be able to claim, **that we have all knowledge & all abilities to complete "the work of the Ministry"!**
For the edifying of the Body of Christ	You must be able to claim that as their pastor, you have all the necessary skills and abilities to "edify" – not only your own church congregation – BUT the whole Body of Christ!
Till we **ALL COME** in the **UNITY OF THE FAITH**	You must be able to claim, that not only is there complete unity, within your own church among your congregation, but there must be unity with every other congregation in your city, state and nation!
And of the (complete) knowledge of the Son of God	You must be able to proclaim that you have a complete knowledge of the Son of God, his concepts, precepts, and plans.
Unto a **Perfect Man**	You must be able to proclaim that not only are you a "perfect man," but each and every member of your congregation is a "perfect man" (or a "perfect woman").
Unto the measure of the stature of the **FULLNESS OF CHRIST**	You must be able to proclaim that each and every member of your congregation **<u>has already reached the fullness of Christ.</u>** This means that you are proclaiming that when Jesus returns in the sky to collect His perfect, holy bride, 100% of your congregation will be there with Him.

Now, I have been saved for more than 65 years, and I have been seriously studying the scriptures for over 40 years, and even with a PhD, I know that I cannot make these claims.

For a person to make these claims means I feel that their pride has overtaken them; and we all know what the scriptures says about that – "Pride comes before a fall."

So, I urge all pastors to re-think their belief systems – examine the scriptures once again, and my arguments outlined here, and then start to recognise why these "offices" are so important in the Body of Christ today.

Remember: If you receive a Prophet – you receive a Prophet's reward. Refuse to accept a Prophet and you get no reward at all!!!

Finally, if you reject the 5-fold ministries, why are you in your office as a pastor? Because remember, the "Office of a pastor" is one of the 5-fold ministries. You can't have one without the other!

CHAPTER 38: RETHINKING THE CHURCH AFTER COVID-19

After the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the first Pentecost, where the book of Acts says that more than 3,000 believers accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour; the disciples were faced with a new scenario, that had never happened to them before. Up until now, they had been with their Master, who had taught the crowds, and it was only when they were sent out, at part of the 70 evangelists, that they were dealing with the people, without Jesus being present.

But now, filled with the Holy Spirit, and seeing the power and effect of the Holy Spirit upon others, a new ministry was brought into being.

Jesus had charged them to "GO" (action word) and "MAKE" (another action word) DISCIPLES [not believers] in Matthew 28:18-20, and here were the first-fruits of that preaching by Apostle Peter, under the power and anointing of the Holy Spirit.

The 11 Apostles' first action was to appoint a "replacement Apostle" for Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Jesus. and then the 12 started to teach all of these **"new believers", to become "new disciples".**

This did not happen overnight, nor did it happen automatically. It took time and effort, especially as the scripture tells us, that the Holy Spirit will "add to the church DAILY" all those that have been called to serve the Master.

The template that was laid down in the first-century church, saw the church grow not only in numbers, but in many new countries, cities, towns, and villages.

The Book of Acts and the Epistles, identifies how the apostles obeyed Jesus, and the Holy Spirit, in fulfilling this mission. They turned the "then-known world" upside down, with their evangelism, and teaching of the Word of God, with authority and power.

The Sanhedrin, which had been around for centuries, were always looking inward, with little or no growth, but the "Followers of the Way," later to be called Christians, were actively promoting the truth of God's word, with positive results ~ because they were looking outwards into a dying world, that was looking for the truth.

We face a similar situation as we come to Pentecost 2022. The church (like the Sanhedrin) has been sitting on its hands, for far too long, looking inwards, within the 4 walls of their buildings. This came to an abrupt end, when governments all around the world, closed churches, and gave instructions not to come and worship in large groups.

However, with the use of technology, live streaming of church services, or worship meetings on Zoom, etc. these meetings are attracting many people to watch these events, who would not normally go to church, in a physical building, but are happy to watch this service, from the comfort of their homes. Why do you think that is?

It has been reported in some churches, that the number of people watching their online services has doubled, compared to the number who would regularly attend their church services in a "physical building."

Others have found that Zoom home-group meetings, have become very popular, because not only can you see other people, but the meetings are interactive, and the groups are not limited by distance from the church ~ or even have to be in the same city, state, or nation.

This opens up the facility for worldwide evangelism, like never before. Now is the time, to make the next major shift, in the way the Word of God is delivered to the masses.

Those churches which grasp this revelation, and ask the Holy Spirit to download the template, that is to work for their church, will prosper and grow. But those churches which go back to the "same old ways," that they have been "doing church" for centuries, will slowly die and become extinct. [Just like the church in Laodicea.]

So, the challenge facing pastors and church leaders, right across the world right now, is how to incorporate these changes, into their present church structures, to keep existing congregation members happy, but also be able to continue to reach out to the wider community, after the COVID restrictions are lifted.

After the restrictions are removed, the Body of Christ ~ the church should never be the same again. If it is, then we will revert to a pre-protestant era, when there was no life in the church, and the Holy Spirit will have to elevate men like Martin Luther, the Wesley brothers, Charles Finney, and many more, to move the church forward out of its complacency.

That is the challenge of Pentecost 2022, and it can only be done, after much soul-searching, and repentance. As it says in 2 Chronicles 7:14; [IF] my people, who are called by my name shall,

1. HUMBLE THEMSELVES,
2. And PRAY,
3. And SEEK MY FACE,
4. And TURN FROM THEIR WICKED WAYS,

[THEN and only then], will I,

1. HEAR FROM HEAVEN,
2. FORGIVE THEIR SINS,
3. And HEAL THEIR LAND.

Notice in this scripture that if mankind <u>does not do ALL 4 of the items</u> <u>mentioned</u>, then the Lord does not have to do anything! This may be a big surprise to some people. This is a "conditional promise from God." [If] you do, [then] I will do, but if you don't, then I won't!

So is the church going to accept the challenge ~ or go back to sleep?

CHAPTER 39: RIGHTEOUSNESS EXALTS A NATION

We have just witnessed hours and hours of "sports television" as nations competed against each other for medals at the Commonwealth Games in India.

We have watched spellbound, as cars rocketed around Mount Panorama, for the yearly tussle between Holden and Ford, to see who wins for another year, and claim the title of "top of the mountain".

Others have stayed up to watch soccer matches, surfing idols, or motorbike racing.

In all of these events, we have cheered, when the victory flag is raised up the flagpole for the victorious nation.

What if we could transfer that same enthusiasm, to the athletes who run a spiritual race; who like Amy Carmichael, spent 55 years as a missionary in India, without even taking a break.

What about the people who went to the Amazon jungle? They went there to spread God's word among the hidden tribes. These people had not even seen a white man before.

We have watched the television as Mary McKillop, was officially named Australia's first saint. It only took 85 years to happen after her death.

Would it not have been better, if we could praise and cheer on these people, who do mighty things for God in their own lifetimes?

This month (October) is pastor appreciation month. Let us cheer on these people, who have recognised the call on their lives, to serve God, and to serve the people in their care.

Let us cheer on the people, who spend each Sunday morning, mentoring the children, the next generation of leaders in our country.

Let us cheer on those who deal with Youth, early adults, and people in crisis. All of these people are running a race for Jesus in our community.

Let us cheer, as we continue to raise the standard, the flag that represents Jesus in our midst.

Remember, the scripture says; "righteousness exalts a nation". Do you want Christ to exalt your nation?

I am sure everybody wants that to happen, but what are we actively doing to "make it happen"? Maybe we should change our focus?

CHAPTER 40: RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD'S WORD

It is said that God's word is always confirmed in 2 or 3 places, and Bible college students are always reminded by Apostle Paul, to search the scriptures for themselves, to make sure that what is said from the pulpit, lines up with God's word, and is consistent throughout the scriptures, (in many different translations, if you are a serious Bible student).

The following texts are from the Thompson's Chain Reference Bible, King James Bible, **(second version[3])** published in 1964.

The number in [red] are the Strong's Concordance numbers for reference to the Hebrew/Greek words and for other references when this same Hebrew/Greek word is used.

THE ENCOUNTER WITH THE SORCERER.

In Acts chapter 13:6 we see an encounter between Paul and a certain sorcerer, [2230] (sorcery) (see also Rev. 18:23) a false prophet [2100] (a false prophet) a Jew, whose name was Barjesus.

Verse 7 explains that he was with the local deputy [2870] (the proconsul) of that area and this person (Sergius Paulus) had called for Paul and Silas and had requested to hear the word of God. [3848] – understanding, [2962] – teachableness, [2960] – spiritual receptivity.

Verse 8 explains that this evil man (Elymas – his name by interpretation) withstood them, [1567] Opposers (see also Ch. 18:6) seeking to turn away [1749] (evil influences) (see also Rom. 2:24), [3593] (enticers) the deputy from the faith.

Now we know that a man of God, would never try to turn anyone away from God's word, because Jesus came into the world to save sinners, so that all men may be saved. Therefore, Elymas' actions are being directed from the evil one!

Verse 9: Then Saul (who also *is called* Paul) [2697] (Paul) [2518] (name changed) filled with the Holy Spirit [1125] ("spirit" filled) set his eyes upon him. (Elymas).

Verse 10: And said: O full of all subtilty, and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?

Verse 11: And now behold, the hand of the Lord *is* upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand.

Verse 12: Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.

In the encounter mentioned above, Paul correctly used his spiritual gift of discernment, to identify and defeat the works of the enemy, and as a result, a new believer entered the kingdom of heaven.

[3] The First Edition (version) of the King James Bible, published in 1611, contained the apocrypha, which the Puritans of England demanded by removed, to form the "Protest-ant" version of the Bible. King James under political pressure relented, and the second edition (version) of the King James Bible was thence published with the apocrypha removed. This took place in 1884, some 273 after the First Edition was printed. This is the publication which has been reproduced ever since.

THE HEALING OF THE CRIPPLED MAN

Acts chapter 14

Verse 8: And there was a certain man a Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked: [4011] (Chronic ailment), [1527] (the lame), [3799] (helplessness).

Verse 9: the same heard Paul speak: who steadfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he (the crippled man) had faith to be healed, (Verse 10) Said in a loud voice: Stand upright on they feet, And he leaped and walked.

In this encounter, Paul uses the gift of Knowledge, that revealed that this crippled man had faith to be healed. As a result, we have another man healed and brought into the kingdom of God.

THE DAMSEL FREED FROM AN EVIL SPIRIT

Acts chapter 16

Verse 16: And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination [2226] (divination), (or python), met us, which brought her masters much gain [580] (unjust gain), by soothsaying. [2229] (soothsayers).

Verse 17: The same followed Paul and us *(Luke, the author of the Book of Acts is an eye witness to this event)* and cried saying: These men are servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation. [705] (Devils confess), [3240] (God's servants), [3794] (Right Way)

Verse 18: And this did she many days. But Paul **being grieved** *(comment: in his spirit for the tormented woman)* turned and said to the spirit: I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.

The Living translation says: Verse 18: This went on day after day until Paul, **in great distress,** turned and spoke to the demon within her. "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her," he said. And instantly it left her.

The Authorized Bible, published in 1954 says: Verse 18: And this did she many days. But Paul **being grieved**, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.

The NIV, published in 1978 says: Verse 18: She kept this up for many days. Finally Paul **became so troubled** that he turned around and said to the spirit. "In the name of Jesus Christ, I command you to come out of her"! At that moment the spirit left her.

Now Back to the KJV.

Verse 19: And when the masters saw that the hope of their gains were gone, they caught Paul and Silas and drew them into the marketplace unto the rulers.

Comment: In three different translations of the scriptures the translators have clearly identified that Paul was "grieved" (or troubled) in his spirit for the woman. His heart attitude was for good - not for evil!

Now we know the rest of the story. Paul and Silas are wrongfully accused, charged, found guilty, beaten and thrown into prison and held in the innermost secure part of the jail.

Satan was using these evil people, to try to stop Paul and Silas's ministry among the people of this region from expanding. But we know that what Satan plans for evil, God always turns around for good.

It is recorded that Paul and Silas were in the prison praising God and singing hymns, loud enough for the whole prison to hear them. Paul mentions elsewhere that he was humbled that he be counted worthy to partake in the torture that Jesus Christ suffered for the sins of all people, (including his own sins – considering himself the chief among sinners).

Paul was about doing the things that the Holy Spirit led him to do. God was setting His plan in motion, so that the jailer and many of the prisoners would be saved, and that Paul and Silas' names be cleared of any wrongdoing.

The next morning the magistrates pleaded with them to leave the city – not as criminals, but as free men.

Paul did not suffer this punishment because he acted out of "annoyance" like was preached last Friday evening.

Paul was not annoyed with the woman. He was grieved in his own spirit, that she had to suffer this torment, suffering and maybe even physical violence, because of her affliction.

The intention in Paul's heart (as recorded by the eye witness Luke, who is very methodical and accurate in his rendition of God's word) clearly shows that Paul acted according to the leading of the Holy Spirit in his actions, and his ministry was increased because of it, and many people became Christians as a result of this action.

Unfortunately, I think there needs to be a clarification of this message, so that this point is made perfectly clear, so that no confusion is left within the congregation, which will be an open door for Satan to enter and cause strife.

But Ps. Jimmy, you are the senior pastor, it is your call. I am just a humble person in the office of teacher. I bring this to your attention because it has troubled my spirit ever since I heard this message, so much so that I am writing this at 3:00 am in the morning.

CHAPTER 41: SALVATION "BELONGS" TO OUR GOD

About 2 days ago, the Holy Spirit woke me up, with the first line of this song wringing in my ears. "***Salvation BELONGS to our God.*** "

But the point that became clear to me was that the emphasis was on the second word **"BELONGS"**. This made me start to think about ownership, and the implication of what "OWNERSHIP" really means.

Many of us think about ownership in the "natural realm", as we continually think about our possessions, the things that we can claim "are ours", because we "own them".

If the car is dirty, it is the "owner's" responsibility, to clean it and wash it, to make it look nice, as the appearance of the car, is a reflection of who we are (on the inside). The same applies to our house, and many other things that we claim "are ours."

Even what we say to our children, what we allow them to wear, where we send them to school, and what rules we set for them, indicates the inner heart desires we have for "our children".

But now let us look at "the spiritual side of ownership". Some of you will be thinking, "This is kindergarten stuff", and you would be right, but I am sure a little revision is always good for the soul.

Jesus came down to earth, with a pre-determined mission statement given to him by His Father. Isaiah 61: 1-2.

"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, (why?) Because the Lord has anointed me, to bring good news to the suffering, and the afflicted. He has sent me to comfort the broken-hearted, to announce liberty to the captives, and to open the eyes of the blind. He has sent me to tell those who mourn that the times of God's favour to them has come, and the day of wrath to his enemies.

Jesus came and fulfilled this mission statement, and then He freely gave up his life, as a ransom, as a perfect, "once for all-time sacrifice", for the sins of the world. [Past, present, & future".]

Now, when we accept this eternal gift from the Father, working through the Son, our sins are covered by the blood of Jesus, and our sins are forgiven, and forgotten, and remembered no more.

Jesus now claims us to be one of His followers. He has "paid the price for us", and therefore. we **"belong"** to him. Jesus can now rightly proclaim before all of heaven and all of the demonic forces; ***"This child belongs to me now, you no longer can make any claim against him, because my blood covers him."***

Now like the "natural example I gave above about the car", it is the owner's job to clean it up and make it look nice. And so, it is the job of Jesus Christ to clean us up also, so that we reflect his attitudes, so that we become a reflection of the attributes of our new owner. That is why it says when we accept Jesus Christ, we become a "new creation". ~~ Jesus is in the process of "cleaning us up" to be a worthy example of His love to fellow man here on earth.

No longer does Satan own us. There was a spiritual transaction made. You (me) made a decision to accept the offer made for us by Jesus Christ on the cross.

He now owns us, and now we have a legal responsibility to respond to the rules that he sets in his word for us, just like the rules we have set for our own children.

Just like we have discipline and punishment for our children, when they disobey our "man-made rules," so we can expect punishment when we disobey "God-made rules". This is clearly laid out for us in the Old Testament and also in the New Testament.

Now I am sure that there are a few people who are thinking; "Hang on a minute" ~~ we live under grace, we are not under the law" and you would be right ~~ but does that give you the "spiritual right" to rebel against Jesus?

Jesus said; "if you love me, you will keep my commandments." If you have to obey commandments, then you are placed under a degree of accountability before the Father in Heaven.

Now you cannot say: "I love Jesus, but I refuse to keep his commandments; who does Jesus think he is, ordering me around"? Well, stop right there! You are trapped by the words of your own mouth. (Proverbs 6:2)

Jesus loves everybody equally, and it might come as a surprise to you, but he loves the unbeliever, with the same love as the believer, because He came to this earth, so that not one soul should be lost.

Now, I did not say that every soul is going to be saved ~~ that is crazy! Jesus came so that there is an opportunity for everyone to hear the message of salvation and then for each of us to make a choice, to have eternal life, a place with Jesus forever, or be damned for eternity, separated from God's presence forever.

Jesus made all of creation and he knows each person before they were even born, so He has an interest in us right from the beginning of time.

In fact, Apostle John got the revelation, we did not choose Jesus, He chose us, He pursued us until we made a commitment to accept his gift and become (once again) part of God's family. [John 15:16]

I say "once again" part of God's family, because when sin came into the world, we were cast out of God's family, to live a life with spiritual death. But praise God, acceptance of Jesus Christ as our Saviour allows us once again to come into God's presence and experience His eternal love for us.

** Can you honestly say that you "belong to Jesus"?

** Are you prepared to follow His rules, without any thought for your safety or well-being?

** Do you love Him enough to go and love your neighbour?

** Do you love him enough to go visit the sick and the helpless?

** Do you love Him enough to feed the hungry?

** Do you love him enough to fight for justice, where you see injustice?

** Do you love him enough to fight for righteousness, where you see unrighteousness?

This is the test of "belonging to Jesus". **ARE YOU UP FOR THE CHALLENGE?**

CHAPTER 42: SALVATION

The Oxford dictionary gives the following definition for salvation:

1. **Salvation.**
   - Salvation of the soul;
   - Deliverance from sin and its consequences, and
   - Admission to heaven, brought about by Jesus Christ.
   - Find salvation
   - Be converted, to have salvation
   - Work out one's own salvation
   - Find unaided how to avoid disaster(s)

2. **Preservation from loss, calamity**, etc.

Salvation derives its root from the verb "to save".

- Be the salvation that preserves us from these things.
- If you need "saving," something is wrong - you are in trouble.
- You have encountered a situation or event, from which you cannot escape in your own strength. This can be in the natural realm or in the spiritual realm, the same rules apply.

When you go to the beach and get caught in a rip, you put up your hand to indicate that you are in trouble, to alert the life savers to come and save you. If they don't see you, or do not respond, then you are left to suffer the consequences, which could be drowning and death.

So, salvation requires two parties: the person in trouble, and the person who will rescue them. In the spiritual situation the same applies.

In the Garden of Eden, when Adam was created by God Almighty, he was created perfect; there was no sin in him.

If he had not rebelled against God's commandment and ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, He could have lived there for eternity.

Because of this rebellion against God, God had to act to prevent Adam (mankind) from remaining in this state for eternity. God placed cherubim around the tree of life, to stop Adam and Eve from eating from this tree, now that they were in a sinful state; otherwise, that is the state that they would have remained in for eternity.

God had to set in motion a plan, to redeem mankind from the sin of Adam. That plan was Jesus Christ.

We are reminded of this by Apostle Paul in Romans 3:23 which states: "For **ALL** have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God."

There are no exceptions in this scripture ~~ "ALL" means "ALL". Everyone has sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

- So now we are all in trouble,
- We all need to have a way out.
- We all need to know how to get back to a place, where we can once again be able to see the glory of God.
- We know we cannot do this by our own strength; otherwise, we would have done it already.
- We have to recognise there are steps to be followed, to bring restoration between Mankind and God.

1. Acknowledge our sinful nature.

a. We all have to recognise and acknowledge that we are sinners, that we are not perfect, and that we need to change, if we are to become acceptable to God.

b. We have to acknowledge that we cannot do this in our own strength.

2. We have to recognise that we have to repent.

a. This is the reason why Elijah the Prophet had the servants pour the 12 water jugs into the trench around the sacrifice on Mount Carmel, before he offered it up to the Lord; to re-baptise the 12 tribes of Israel, back into the covenant with God.

b. John the Baptist recognised that sin was an individual thing. It was not to be treated as a corporate malady, like had previously been thought, in the Old Testament.

c. John the Baptist came on the scene in Israel, preaching about individual sin, and that each individual (because of their sin) were now outside of God's covenant, with the nation of Israel.

d. He proclaimed that each individual, had to go through the waters of baptism. This baptism was a "baptism of repentance", proclaiming publicly, that the person was sorry for their rebellion against God, and that they were changing their ways, and once again, trying to follow after God and keep His laws.

e. This baptism "covered" their sins, but it did not forgive them their sins. It was however preparing them to hear and receive the message about Jesus Christ.

3. While we were yet sinners Christ died for us.

a. Romans 5:8-9 confirms this: But God demonstrated His own love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ dies for us. Much more than, having now been **justified** by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

b. "Justified" means ~ "Just if I'd" never sinned.

4. **Romans 5:10-11.**
   a. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.
   b. So, we have to recognise that in the shedding of the blood of Jesus Christ (the perfect Lamb) there is the possibility for our past sins to be forever forgiven and forgotten. **But it is not an automatic occurrence!!!**
   c. The sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross is a free gift from God. It was given for us while we still did not know Him. He willingly died for our sins while we were yet sinners.
   d. **Salvation is a partnership.** Even though Jesus Christ died for us so that our sins can be forgiven. It is only possible if we agree to the partnership. We have to be prepared to do the following, as is defined in Acts 2:38:
      i. Acknowledge our sins.
      ii. Repent of our sins (say the sinner's prayer).
      iii. Be baptised in water, as a public confession & demonstration of a changed life.
      iv. Receive the Holy Spirit.

5. **There is salvation in no-one else**
   a. In John 14:6 Jesus says these words: I AM the way, I AM the truth, and I AM the life, no man (or woman) comes to the Father, except through me.
   b. Jesus was making it very clear that salvation is through Jesus only.
   c. It is not through Mary, it is not through the Pope, it is not through Buddha, it is not through Mohammad, nor any of the multiplicity of Hindu or Sikh gods.
   d. It is not through any of the Prophets of the Old Testament, nor any of the Apostles of the New Testament.
   e. It is not through any of the Five-fold ministries of today. It is through the blood sacrifice of Jesus Christ and His resurrection alone.

So, at the conclusion of this study, each one of us needs to make a decision.

- **If you died tonight, do you know with 100% certainty that you are saved?**
  - Have you acknowledged that you are a sinner?
  - Have you repented of your sins?
  - Have you asked Jesus to come into your heart and abide and dwell within you?
  - Have you, in obedience to God's word been baptised in water?
  - Have you received the Holy Spirit into your life?
  - Have the gifts of the Holy Spirit been made manifest in your life?
- If you can answer yes to each of these questions, then you know that you are saved.
- If you can't, you need to do something about it.

CHAPTER 43: EPHESIANS 4:1-4

This message was first given in January 2003.

In the Message Bible it says:

"In light of all this, here's what I want you to do. While I'm locked up here, a prisoner for the Master, I want you to get out there and walk – better yet, run! – on the road God called you to travel. **I don't want any of you sitting on your hands, I don't want anyone strolling off, down some path that goes to nowhere.** And make sure that you do this with humility and discipline – not in fits and starts, but steadily, pouring yourselves out for each other, in acts of love, alert at noticing differences, and quick at mending fences. **You were all called to travel on the same road, and in the same direction, so stay together, both outwardly and inwardly.**

While Apostle Paul was in prison, he was encouraging the people in the church at Ephesus to go on with God, not slowly – but at a fast pace, keeping all together, making sure that all were travelling the same road, and not getting distracted by things going on around

them, which caused them to drift away, from the true path, and end up in some blind alley.

As we commence this New Year in Jesus Christ, we need to do some spiritual auditing (spiritual internal checking), to make sure we are on the right path, and that we are going in the right direction.

The special part of this passage, is to understand that God has called you to travel this road.

- Which road is that?
- Do you know which road God wants you to travel?
- Do you know what God wants you to do this year?

These are questions, that each person here today, needs to ask God - and be sure he/she gets a clear answer, otherwise you could be heading up a blind alley - to nowhere!

Further along in Ephesians chapter 4, we find that God gives special gifts to the Body of Christ, so that the whole Body can become mature in their understanding of God's word, its purpose for the Body, and for each individual believer.

God does not want believers to remain spiritual babies, wearing baby booties and nappies, instead of large warrior boots, and the spiritual armour, to do battle against Satan, his principalities and powers.

If you try to fight Satan with immature understanding, (i.e., baby clothes and footwear) you will soon be defeated.

It is only when we are mature in Christ that we can stand against the enemy and call upon the promises of God and defeat that enemy. The word says that Satan is defeated by the words of our testimony.

As we commence 2003, we must be prepared to step aside from our old ways and confirm the path that God has set before us, so that in living out 2003 according to God's plan, we give glory and honour to Him.

In John Chapter 15 God challenges us to bear fruit. He explains that we cannot grow fruit if we are not connected to the branches (or the vine) and the fruit will not be nourished and fully developed, if we don't have the proper elements for growth flowing through our veins.

The Holy Spirit is the proper element that we need to have flowing through our veins, so that He can lead us into all truth and to protect us on the journey.

Apostle John explains and makes clear, the word-picture of an orchard, with fruit trees and the gardener tending them. Those parts of the tree which does not bear any fruit he trims off and casts into the fire to destroy it.

The parts of the branches which bear fruit he prunes back, so that it will continue to bear good, wholesome, well-developed fruit – without a blemish.

John identifies that God the Father is the Gardner, that Jesus Christ is the tree, we are the branches and the Holy Spirit is the correct elements to give good fruit, which will not fall off the tree and rot on the ground.

We have seen the effects of the drought on TV, with crops and cattle dying. This is because they were not connected to the life-giving water needed for them to survive.

It is the same with us, in a physical and spiritual sense. If we don't get food and water our bodies shrivel up and we die. If we don't get enough spiritual food, our spiritual body is not equipped to keep us in close communion with Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit, and we will find it hard to fight our spiritual battles and live at peace, with our brothers and sisters.

Jesus says in John 15: 8 that "His true disciples" produce beautiful harvests, of pure fruit, which brings glory and honour to the Father.

John 15:16 says: **"You didn't choose me I chose you! And appointed you, to go and produce lovely fruit always, so that no matter what you ask for from the Father, using my name (the name of Jesus Christ), He will give it to you."**

Many people today think that they decided to become a Christian – but that is not what the Scripture says. While we were still sinners Jesus Christ selected us, and chose us, to be His own. He died on the cross for us, so that we could have a new relationship with God the Father in heaven.

Jesus also states in the passage, that if we bear good quality fruit, we can pray to God the Father in the name of Jesus Christ, and ask for special prayers to be answered and He will give it to you.
This does not mean that we all go out today and ask to win the lottery – or not to have to work anymore – NO! these things would not glorify the Father.
But it does allow us to pray for peace in our hearts, for God to heal our bodies – or those of our family – to give us strong courage, in time of trials, and to have joy in our hearts.
Now joy is quite different to happiness.
HAPPINESS, SADNESS, TIREDNESS, are all emotional conditions we experience, due directly to the situations happening around us.
On the other hand, JOY is a condition of the heart – a spiritual condition, which we can have when our relationship with God is correct –

- when we are doing what He wants us to do,
- and at the time he wants us to do it, and
- at the place He wants us to do it.

When we can look at our lives, and KNOW that we have this joy in our hearts, we can be assured that we are on the correct road, that Jesus talks about in the beginning of this passage.
If we are not sure of this, we can check it out by regularly reading of God's word, by setting aside a time to be in His presence, in regular prayer sessions, and to meet with other believers at church and in cell groups.
As we commence 2003, I would urge all of you to try to attend a cell group meeting each week, either in the church that you attend – or by starting your own Sudanese cell groups.
In these cell groups you will:

- Study the word of God,
- Share testimonies about what God has done in your life,
- Pray for one another, for the leaders of our nation, and for peace in Israel – all things we are told to do in the Scriptures.

Why do I say that you should do all these things? Well In John 16:1 a prophecy is given about what is to happen in the future.
"I have told these things so that you won't be staggered (or troubled) by all that lies ahead of you. You will be persecuted and ex-communicated from your synagogues, and indeed the time is coming when those who kill you, will think they are doing God's service. This is because they have never known God the Father, or Me".
That was a prophecy written more than 2000 years ago, and you know that it is now coming true. You have been persecuted and forced to leave your churches, and your country, because there are people there who want to kill you, believing that if they do this they are doing God's will – but Jesus says that they don't know Him – or God the Father.
As we come to a time, where we maybe caught up in a war with Iraq, we must earnestly pray for peace, for the Lord to clearly direct our paths in true righteousness, so that we make decisions based upon His word, and not upon things going on around us.
The Scripture says in 2 Timothy 1: 7-8 **"for God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power, and of love and of self-discipline." "Do not be ashamed, then, of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner, but join with me, in suffering for the gospel, relying on the power of God,"**
As we enter 2003, we must grasp hold of the promises of His word, so that we will have all the armour necessary, to deal with the situations we will face in the next few months.
John 15:24 says: **"But I will send you the Comforter – the Holy Spirit, the source of all truth. He will come to you from the Father, and will tell you all about me. And you must tell everyone about me, because you have been with me, from the beginning".**
If you are worried – talk to each other, - pray together to the Father, so that the Holy Spirit can reveal this truth to each of you.
It is the Holy Spirit flowing through our veins, which gives us the Joy of salvation, the strength to go on in difficult situations, revelation knowledge and wisdom, to sort out our problems, and to keep us walking in the right direction, on the road chosen by God for us.
Let us pray.

Heavenly Father, we come before you now in the name of Jesus Christ, your Son, who gave His life on the Cross for us, so that we can have an eternal relationship with you. We bless you with our praise and we bless you with our lives.
We ask that you anoint us with your Holy Spirit, to show us on the path, you have chosen for each of us, and that You prompt us, with your word, to show us the way to follow.
Give us a new desire, to read your Holy word each day, and to pray for your guidance each morning, so that each day, we live can be bringing glory to your name.
Heavenly Father, we ask that you continue to bless our children, give them the ability to learn the English language, and help them each day in their schoolwork, as they adapt to new surroundings in schools here in Australia.
We ask that you provide for our families, with food, jobs and housing, so that we can live in peace with our neighbours, showing them your love, in acts of kindness, and bringing joy to their hearts.
We pray for Peace in Israel, so that your word maybe put into practise in that country, and so that you may bring blessings upon this nation we live in.
Continue to shower your rain down upon the parts of Australia, so badly affected by the drought, and put your comfort into the hearts of the farmers.
We ask all these things in the name of Jesus Christ, your son and our redeemer.
AMEN.

CHAPTER 44: SEEING IS NOT BELIEVING

In the scriptures the accounts of the trial, crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus, are well documented in all of the Gospels.

But there are 12 Appearances of Jesus, after His Resurrection recorded in scripture, so let us look at them today.

Introduction:

Jesus died in public and his body was released by the Roman authorities to Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, who placed him in a sepulchre, (tomb) which was also observed by the women from Galilee. Matthew records that a "great stone rolled to the door of the sepulchre". Matt. 27:60.

The chief priests remembering that Jesus had prophesised that he would rise again after 3 days went to Pilate, who commanded in Matt 27:64 that the sepulchre be made sure, (secure) until the third day, lest his disciples come by night and steal his body saying 'he is risen from the dead'.

To the ever-cautious Pilate, this would have given him some security and an action to keep the appearance of control. They also sealed the stone and set a watch. The seal meant that if the stone were moved it could be shown that the grave had been tampered with. The guard meant no one could come in or out without being seen and noted by the guard.

Therefore, everything was secure by Friday evening, according to our manner of describing days. The Sabbath day rest ended at 6 p.m. on the Saturday, and by then, it would be too dark to work and so no one, like Mary Magdalene, would come to the tomb, until the first day of the Jewish week. That would be Sunday for us. (I presume she came early once it was light, even though the day time temperatures are not too extreme being about 65 F in the middle of the day which would be about 17 or 18 degrees centigrade.)

The 12 appearances of Jesus after his resurrection from Easter Sunday onwards are:

1. Sunday morning to Mary Magdalene. [John 20:11-18]

Mary Magdalene came to the tomb, presumably soon after the dawn of the day, one would imagine, the sun weakly putting its rays across the tops of the trees, and rocky outcrops. One would not think that she was looking forward to attending to the body, but it would have been important, to do this service to her Lord. But she finds the stone rolled away, and the tomb empty. She runs to get Peter and John and they find the linen that Jesus' body had been wrapped in, and the head cloth also folded up. Mary stands there crying and moving towards the entrance to the tomb sees two angels sitting inside. They ask her why she is crying, and she says they have taken her Lord away, and I don't know where they have put him. Then turning around, she sees Jesus, although she does not recognise him, thinking him to be the gardener. Why she did not realise? It may be incorrectly

assumed that Jesus, in his resurrected form, was not wholly human and therefore did not always chose to be like his former self, and he may not be wearing his usual clothing. He says her name and she says; "*Rabboni*". Then she knew and embraced him, the resurrected Jesus, who then sends her to spread the news by telling the disciples.

2. The women returning from the sepulchre. Matt 28:9-10 says 'they' but who are 'they'? Matthew in verse 1, has Mary Magdalene and the other Mary. Mary Magdalene, it seems had already left the scene, but the other Mary was there, and whoever came to help them, maybe Salome as recorded by Mark. Jesus speaking to them clearly, marks that they knew him and this time, the scripture says, they fall towards his feet. This time the message was to tell his brethren. To whom is Jesus speaking? The Greek word is *athelphous,* as in brothers, literal or figurative. It may simply mean the 11, or his relatives, or the brethren in general.

3. Appearance to Peter. This is recorded in Luke 24:34 as well as in 1 Cor. 15:5. It does not say where or when. It has been suggested that Simon Peter alone, was on the road to Emmaus or alone in Jerusalem. But it clearly happened and after Peter denied him three times, and cut off the ear of the soldier that Jesus had to heal, it must have been of special comfort to him.

4. On the road to Emmaus Luke 24:13-31. There were two walking to the village of Emmaus, which is 7 or 8 miles from Jerusalem. Cleopas is the one named. It is thought he may be Alphaeus the father of James, who was one of the twelve, but not James the son of Zebedee. The other could be Peter again, but it seems it was not one of the other twelve. One commentator has suggested that it could be Luke himself. But the two record a stranger joining them on the road, not an unusual event, to see someone from out of town, as it was the feast of Passover. Again, they did not recognise him in his new form, and his old clothes, had been divided among the soldiers. They pour out their hearts, all the things that they had seen and known about in Jerusalem, from his death on the cross, a few days ago, to the empty tomb, and the message from the angels that Jesus was alive. The apparent stranger, that being Jesus, expounded on the scriptures that the Messiah should die before being glorified (given honour). The two asked him to remain with them, clearly keen to have passages being opened to them, and he stayed to have a meal and he took the bread, blessed it and broke it, and they then knew who he was, before disappearing from in front of them, or vanished as the scripture states. In these days of science fiction, it would be said he dematerialised.

5. Sunday evening without Thomas. John 20:19-25 The disciples, minus Thomas, were gathered in a (locked) room with the doors shut, when Jesus came in the middle of them without coming through the door saying, 'Peace be with you'. Having done so, he showed them his hands and his side. In the Luke account (Luke 24:36-49) he shows them his feet and then eats with them. He appears as a human with skin and bone. It does not categorically say the scars were there, but there was no doubt in the mind of the disciples that it was Jesus. Proof would have been needed, and that is why he did not ascend to his Father for 40 days.

6. One week later. John 20:26-29 This time Thomas is present. It has been suggested by some commentators that Thomas was a pessimist, and perhaps a person who felt his 'glass was half-empty' rather than 'half- full'. This characteristic appears to be used to put this record down. Thomas says unless I see his hands and the print of the nails, put my finger into the print of the nails and put my hand in to his side, I will not believe. Thomas had his hands put in the nail print and the gash in the side and says, "My Lord and my God". Clearly Jesus here has the precise signs, that Thomas was wishing to see, that of a person who has died by crucifixion with a gashed side as recorded in John 19:34, that proved he was dead, before they took him off the cross, as the blood and the water were separate.

7. Three weeks later to the disciples on the shores of Galilee John 21:1-14. John records it "at the Sea of Tiberias", and states this is the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples. Seven of the disciples had gone fishing. These included Simon Peter, James and John, Thomas and Nathaniel (otherwise known as Bartholomew) as well as two others, that are not recorded but could be Andrew and Philip. They went night fishing but caught nothing. Jesus was standing on the sea shore although they did not recognise him. He tells them to cast their nets on the other side and they catch so many fish that they were

not able to draw the net in. At that point John realises that it is the Lord Jesus and tells Simon Peter who realises the truth of John's statement and rushes out towards the shore. Jesus prepares breakfast and gives it to them, and afterwards has a long conversation with Peter.

8. To the eleven on a mountain in Galilee, as Jesus had appointed. Matthew 28:16-20. We do not know what mountain, as it is not recorded and when they, which would include Matthew himself, saw him and they worshipped him. Although it says some doubted, it does not say whom or what those doubts entailed.

9. To more than 500 brethren (*athelphous*) in Galilee 1 Cor. 15:6. The significance of this is the large number; for us a moment to imagine as if we were of that 500.

10. James at close of 40 days.1 Cor. 15:7 No other details are added. It is thought that this is more likely James, the writer of the epistle, rather than James, the son of Zebedee (Acts 12:1-2) who would have been dead by the time that the first epistle to the Corinthians was written by Paul in approximately A.D. 55.

11. His Ascension Luke 24:50-51. Jesus led them to Bethany, presumably from Jerusalem. He lifted up his hands and blessed them, and then it appears that he was carried or lifted up. The Greek word for carried up is *anefereto,* which means to take up literally or figuratively–bear, bring, offer up, carry, lead up. Acts 1:9 records Jesus being "taken up". In this case it is the Greek word '*epirthy*' which means to raise up literally, or figuratively, exalt self, poise, lift, take up. He was carried up into heaven. The Greek word for heaven is *ouranon* ,which gives the idea of elevation, the sky, heaven as the abode of God, by implication happiness, power, and eternity. Ouranon is also used in Rev. 21:1. Acts 1:9 (Diaglott) says "a cloud carried him away from their sight" while they were looking towards the heavens (*ouranon*). This is a spectacular event, that they were watching. One can imagine them gazing for any last sight in case, he should come into view for one more glimpse. However, they were distracted by the sight of two angels, which the record states as "two men standing by them in white raiment," with a message of encouragement.

12. Paul on the road to Damascus. Acts 9:3-6. The account says as Paul neared Damascus a light came suddenly from heaven and a voice said, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?' 'Who are you, Lord? Asks Paul. 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting'. Paul's life was transformed from that moment, when he heard the Lord Jesus.

Maybe this final one should not be included, as there was no visible sight, just a light, and sound as Jesus had already ascended to the Father. Jesus' voice and words are prominent proof of his resurrection in several of these sightings.

<u>How does this prove the resurrection?</u>

It proves that the resurrected Jesus was seen of MANY PEOPLE much more than 500 hundred, women and men. He was seen or heard many times— to be exact eleven or twelve times, of those recorded in the New Testament, and for a period of 40 days. Even those inclined to doubt received proof. The many details given in the accounts, also attest to its authenticity. All the records agree he could speak audibly, could eat and appear as flesh and bone and reason and instruct with intelligence. It shows the form of such a resurrected being, and would backup what they already knew that Jesus was the Son of God. It also shows the surprise, elation, and other emotions being evoked, and that these accounts were real and not contrived in advance.

But the point I want to concentrate on today, is that more than 500 people saw him (point number 9), as recorded in 1 Corinthians 15:16, and were told to wait in Jerusalem for the promise from the Father to come, **but sadly only 120 remained to receive the Holy Spirit baptism in the upper room ~ the Promise from the Father.**

Now some scholars say that there is a scriptural reason for the 120 people in the upper room, as they are thought to represent 10 people from each of the 12 tribes of Israel. These then go out to become the instruments that changes the world through the spread of the Word of God.

Now we know that the Baptism of the Holy Spirit was the empowerment that was needed to allow Peter (who had previously denied Jesus 3 times) to get up, and preach the sermons, as recounted in the Book of Acts in chapter 2, resulting in 3,000 Jewish people accepting Jesus as their Saviour that day. So, the multiplication factor is one gets 3,000, therefore 120 people preaching gets millions.

They argue that this is why when Jesus appears in the clouds and the Orthodox Jews recognise, him as their Messiah, the "10 people per tribe" becomes 12,000 people per tribe, the 144,000 that is to become the greatest evangelistic movement, to ever be on the earth, and it says in the Book of Revelation that this "once-off" evangelistic movement, will never happen again.

That is something exciting to look forward to, but right now, the day before Western Society celebrates Pentecost 2020, I have to ask you this question.

Do you believe that Jesus rose from the dead, as the activation of the promised New Covenant, recorded in Jeremiah 31:31, and that He is waiting for you to accept the Promise from the Father, the blessed Holy Spirit, which activates all believers, to do great and mighty things, in this corrupt and evil world of darkness?

Are you ready to go and turn the world "right-side up", to once again be in line, with the Promises of His word?

It is exciting times that we live in, as you ready for what Jesus has in store for you, for the rest of your life???

CHAPTER 45: MATTHEW 5

You're Blessed.

When Jesus saw his ministry drawing huge crowds, he climbed a hillside. Those who were apprenticed to him, the committed, climbed with him. Arriving at a quiet place, he sat down and taught his climbing companions. This is what he said:

"You're blessed when you're at the end of your rope. With less of you there is more of God and his rule.

"You're blessed when you feel you've lost what is most dear to you. Only then can you be embraced by the One most dear to you.

"You're blessed when you are content with just who you are—no more, no less. That's the moment you find yourselves proud owners of everything that can't be bought.

"You're blessed when you've worked up a good appetite for God. He's food and drink in the best meal you'll ever eat.

"You're blessed when you care. At the moment of being 'care- full,' you find yourselves cared for.

"You're blessed when you get your inside world—your mind and heart—put right. Then you can see God in the outside world.

"You're blessed, when you can show people, "how to cooperate", instead of compete or fight. That's when you discover who you really are, and your place in God's family.

"You're blessed when your commitment to God provokes persecution. The persecution drives you even deeper into God's kingdom.

"Not only that ~ count yourselves blessed, every time people put you down, or throw you out, or speak lies about you, to discredit me. What it means, is that the truth, is too close for comfort, and they are uncomfortable. You can be glad when that happens—give a cheer even! for though they don't like it, I do! And all heaven applauds. And know that you are in good company. My prophets and witnesses have always gotten into this kind of trouble.

Salt and Light.

"Let me tell you why you are here. You're here to be salt-seasoning that brings out the God-flavors of this earth. If you lose your saltiness, how will people taste godliness? You've lost your usefulness and will end up in the garbage.

"Here's another way to put it: You're here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We're going public with this, as public as a city on a hill. If I make you light-bearers, you don't think I'm going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I'm putting you on a light stand. Now that I've put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand—shine! Keep open house; be generous with your lives. By opening up to others, you'll prompt people to open up with God, this generous Father in heaven.

Completing God's Law.

"Don't suppose for a minute that I have come to demolish the Scriptures—either God's Law or the Prophets. I'm not here to demolish, but to complete. I am going to put it all

together, pull it all together in a vast panorama. God's Law is more real and lasting than the stars in the sky and the ground at your feet. Long after stars burn out and earth wears out, God's Law will be alive and working.

"Trivialize even the smallest item in God's Law, and you will only have trivialized yourself. But take it seriously, show the way for others, and you will find honour in the kingdom. Unless you do far better than the Pharisees, in the matters of right living, you won't know the first thing about entering the kingdom.

Murder.

"You're familiar with the command to the ancients, 'Do not murder.' I'm telling you that anyone who is so much as angry with a brother or sister is guilty of murder. Carelessly call a brother 'idiot!' and you just might find yourself hauled into court. Thoughtlessly yell 'stupid!' at a sister and you are on the brink of hellfire. The simple moral fact is that words kill.

"This is how I want you to conduct yourself in these matters. If you enter your place of worship and, about to make an offering, you suddenly remember a grudge a friend has against you, abandon your offering, leave immediately, go to this friend and make things right. Then and only then, come back and work things out with God.

"Or say you're out on the street and an old enemy accosts you. Don't lose a minute. Make the first move; make things right with him. After all, if you leave the first move to him, knowing his track record, you're likely to end up in court, maybe even jail. If that happens, you won't get out without a stiff fine.

Adultery and Divorce.

"You know the next commandment pretty well, too: 'Don't go to bed with another's spouse.' But don't think you've preserved your virtue simply by staying out of bed. Your heart can be corrupted by lust, even quicker than your body. Those leering looks you think nobody notices—they also corrupt.

"Let's not pretend this is easier than it really is. If you want to live a morally pure life, here's what you have to do: You have to blind your right eye the moment you catch it in a lustful leer. You have to choose to live one-eyed or else be dumped on a moral trash pile. And you have to chop off your right hand the moment you notice it raised threateningly. Better a bloody stump than your entire being discarded for good in the dump.

"Remember the Scripture that says, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him do it legally, giving her divorce papers and her legal rights'? Too many of you are using that as a cover for selfishness and whim, pretending to be righteous just because you are 'legal.' Please, no more pretending. If you divorce your wife, you're responsible for making her an adulteress (unless she has already made herself that by sexual promiscuity). And if you marry such a divorced adulteress, you're automatically an adulterer yourself. You can't use legal cover to mask a moral failure.

Empty Promises.

"And don't say anything you don't mean. This counsel is embedded deep in our traditions. You only make things worse when you lay down a smoke screen of pious talk, saying, 'I'll pray for you,' and never doing it, or saying, 'God be with you,' and not meaning it. You don't make your words true by embellishing them with religious lace. In making your speech sound more religious, it becomes less true. Just say 'yes' and 'no.' When you manipulate words to get your own way, you go wrong.

Love Your Enemies.

"Here's another old saying that deserves a second look: 'Eye for eye, tooth for tooth.' Is that going to get us anywhere? Here's what I propose: 'Don't hit back at all.' If someone strikes you, stand there and take it. If someone drags you into court and sues for the shirt off your back, giftwrap your best coat and make a present of it. And if someone takes unfair advantage of you, use the occasion to practice the servant life. No more tit-for-tat stuff. Live generously.

"You're familiar with the old written law, 'Love your friend,' and its unwritten companion, 'Hate your enemy.' I'm challenging that. I'm telling you to love your enemies. Let them bring out the best in you, not the worst. When someone gives you a hard time, respond

with the energies of prayer, for then you are working out of your true selves, your God-created selves. This is what God does. He gives his best—the sun to warm and the rain to nourish—to everyone, regardless: the good and bad, the nice and nasty. If all you do is love the lovable, do you expect a bonus? Anybody can do that. If you simply say hello to those who greet you, do you expect a medal? Any run-of-the-mill sinner does that.

"In a word, what I'm saying is, Grow up! You're kingdom subjects. Now live like it! Live out your God-created identity. Live generously and graciously toward others, the way God lives toward you.

MATTHEW 6

The World Is Not a Stage:

"Be especially careful when you are trying to be good, so that you don't make a performance out of it. It might be good theater, but the God who made you won't be applauding.

"When you do something for someone else, don't call attention to yourself. You've seen them in action, I'm sure 'playactors' I call them—treating prayer meeting and street corners alike as a stage, acting compassionate as long as someone is watching, playing to the crowds. They get applause, true, but that's all they get. When you help someone out, don't think about how it looks. Just do it—quietly and unobtrusively. That is the way your God, who conceived you in love, working behind the scenes, helps you out.

Pray With Simplicity.

"And when you come before God, don't turn that into a theatrical production either. All these people making a regular show out of their prayers, hoping for stardom! Do you think God sits in a box seat?

"Here's what I want you to do: Find a quiet, secluded place so you won't be tempted to role-play before God. Just be there as simply and honestly as you can manage. The focus will shift from you to God, and you will begin to sense his grace.

"The world is full of so-called prayer warriors who are prayer-ignorant. They're full of formulas and programs and advice, peddling techniques for getting what you want from God. Don't fall for that nonsense. This is "Your Father"; you are dealing with, and he knows better than you what you need. With a God like this loving you, you can pray very simply. Like this:

'Our Father in heaven,
Reveal who you are.
Set the world right;
Do what's best—
as above, so below.
Keep us alive with three square meals.
Keep us forgiven with you and forgiving others.
Keep us safe from ourselves and the Devil.
You're in charge!
You can do anything you want!
You're ablaze in beauty!
Yes. Yes. Yes.'

"In prayer there is a connection between what God does and what you do. You can't get forgiveness from God, for instance, without also forgiving others. If you refuse to do your part, you cut yourself off from God's part.

"When you practice some appetite-denying discipline to better concentrate on God, don't make a production out of it. It might turn you into a small-time celebrity, but it won't make you a saint. If you 'go into training' inwardly, act normal outwardly. Shampoo and comb your hair, brush your teeth, wash your face. God doesn't require attention-getting devices. He won't overlook what you are doing; he'll reward you well.

A Life of God-Worship.

"Don't hoard treasure down here where it gets eaten by moths and corroded by rust or—worse! ~ stolen by burglars. Stockpile treasure in heaven, where it's safe from moth and rust and burglars. It's obvious, isn't it? The place where your treasure is, is the place you will most want to be, and end up being.

"Your eyes are windows into your body. If you open your eyes wide in wonder and belief, your body fills up with light. If you live squinty-eyed in greed and distrust, your body is a dank cellar. If you pull the blinds on your windows, what a dark life you will have!

"You can't worship two gods at once. Loving one God; you'll end up hating the other. Adoration of one, feeds contempt for the other. You can't worship God and Money both.

"If you decide for God, living a life of God-worship, it follows that you don't fuss about what's on the table at mealtimes or whether the clothes in your closet are in fashion. There is far more to your life than the food you put in your stomach, more to your outer appearance than the clothes you hang on your body. Look at the birds, free and unfettered, not tied down to a job description, careless in the care of God. And you count far more to him than birds.

"Has anyone by fussing in front of the mirror ever gotten taller by so much as an inch? All this time and money wasted on fashion—do you think it makes that much difference? Instead of looking at the fashions, walk out into the fields and look at the wildflowers. They never primp or shop, but have you ever seen color and design quite like it? The ten best-dressed men and women in the country look shabby alongside them.

"If God gives such attention to the appearance of wildflowers—most of which are never even seen—don't you think he'll attend to you, take pride in you, do his best for you? What I'm trying to do here is to get you to relax, to not be so preoccupied with getting, so you can respond to God's giving. People who don't know God and the way he works fuss over these things, but you know both God and how he works. Steep your life in God-reality, God-initiative, God-provisions. Don't worry about missing out. You'll find all your everyday human concerns will be met.

"Give your entire attention to what God is doing right now, and don't get worked up about what may or may not happen tomorrow. God will help you deal with whatever hard things come up when the time comes.

MATTHEW 7

A Simple Guide for Behavior.

"Don't pick on people, jump on their failures, criticize their faults—unless, of course, you want the same treatment. That critical spirit has a way of boomeranging. It's easy to see a smudge on your neighbor's face and be oblivious to the ugly sneer on your own. Do you have the nerve to say, 'Let me wash your face for you,' when your own face is distorted by contempt? It's this whole traveling road-show mentality all over again, playing a holier-than-thou part instead of just living your part. Wipe that ugly sneer off your own face, and you might be fit to offer a washcloth to your neighbor.

"Don't be flip with the sacred. Banter and silliness give no honor to God. Don't reduce holy mysteries to slogans. In trying to be relevant, you're only being cute and inviting sacrilege.

"Don't bargain with God. Be direct. Ask for what you need. This isn't a cat-and-mouse, hide-and-seek game we're in. If your child asks for bread, do you trick him with sawdust? If he asks for fish, do you scare him with a live snake on his plate? As bad as you are, you wouldn't think of such a thing. You're at least decent to your own children. So, don't you think the God who conceived you in love will be even better?

"Here is a simple, rule-of-thumb guide for behavior: Ask yourself what you want people to do for you, then grab the initiative and do it for them. Add up God's Law and Prophets and this is what you get.

Being and Doing;

"Don't look for shortcuts to God. The market is flooded with surefire, easygoing formulas for a successful life that can be practiced in your spare time. Don't fall for that stuff, even though crowds of people do. The way to life—to God; is vigorous and requires total attention.

"Be wary of false preachers who smile a lot, dripping with practiced sincerity. Chances are they are out to rip you off some way or other. Don't be impressed with charisma; look for character. Who preachers are is the main thing, not what they say. A genuine leader will never exploit your emotions or your pocketbook. These diseased trees with their bad apples are going to be chopped down and burned.

"Knowing the correct password—saying 'Master, Master,' for instance—isn't going to get you anywhere with me. What is required is serious obedience—doing what My Father wills. I can see it now—at the Final Judgment thousands strutting up to me and saying, 'Master, we preached the Message, we bashed the demons, our God-sponsored projects had everyone talking.' And do you know what I am going to say? 'You missed the boat. All you did was use me to make yourselves important. You don't impress me one bit. You're out of here.'

"These words I speak to you are not incidental additions to your life, homeowner improvements to your standard of living. They are foundational words, words to build a life on. If you work these words into your life, you are like a smart carpenter who built his house on solid rock. Rain poured down, the river flooded, a tornado hit—but nothing moved that house. It was fixed to the rock.

"But if you just use my words in Bible studies and don't work them into your life, you are like a stupid carpenter who built his house on the sandy beach. When a storm rolled in and the waves came up, it collapsed like a house of cards."

When Jesus concluded his address, the crowd burst into applause. They had never heard teaching like this. It was apparent that he was living everything he was saying—quite a contrast to their religion teachers! This was the best teaching they had ever heard.

CHAPTER 46: SHALL WE KILL THE INNOCENT WITH THE GUILTY?

God Almighty has been concerned throughout all of His Creation and His Word with the protection of the innocent, whenever He wanted to chastise, or punish the guilty.

Today I want to challenge you all in this regard also.

When God Almighty looked down upon the earth and saw that it was corrupt, He wanted to demolish the earth and all that He had created and start again.

But He looked down and saw a righteous man – Noah. God could not destroy Noah along with the unrighteous and He had to put a plan into place to protect him from death.

<u>God could not destroy the righteous with the unrighteous!</u>

When God sent down the angels to destroy Sodom & Gomorrah, Abraham pleaded with the Angel of the Lord and said: "If there is but five righteous people in this city, will you still destroy it?

The Angel of the Lord replied: "For five righteous persons I will not destroy the city."

<u>God could not destroy the righteous with the unrighteous!</u>

The angels only found four righteous people within the city, but even then, God Almighty would not allow four righteous people, to be killed along with the unrighteous people, He was going to destroy.

The angels had to extract Lot, his wife and two daughters from the city, because they were righteous, before they could destroy the city.

From these examples in God's Word, we see that God Almighty puts great emphasis on protecting the innocent and the righteous, in whatever plans He wants to put into place.

The Scripture says in Matthew Chapter 10:32-33 that if we proclaim God's Word to the nations, Jesus will proclaim our names before the Father in Heaven.

If we do not proclaim His name before the nations, then our names will not be proclaimed before the Father in Heaven.

The Scripture in Matthew Chapter 7:1-2 also tells us to judge not – for whatever measure we use to judge others, will be the same measure, that God Almighty will use to judge us - which is an awesome thought.

In America we have been told that people are very proud of the slogan, which is written on their coins: "IN GOD WE TRUST."

Today I want to have a look at that statement and what it really means to you as individuals, and as a nation.

If you "trust in God," which God, is it that you trust in?

Is it the God Almighty?

- who made the heaven and the earth?
- who will judge the quick and the dead?
- who will come upon you like a thief in the night, when you are least expecting it, and;
- you shall see Him face to face?
- He will judge you, and you will live with Him for eternity, if your name is found in the Lamb's book of life?

Is this the God you believe in?

If so, then you must have a Jesus Christ experience in your lives, otherwise you don't believe in Him – you have just heard about Him – a totally different thing altogether.

I know about Queen Elizabeth, who rules over the UK – but I have never had an encounter with Her – I have never spoken to her face-to-face. Therefore, I can say I know about her but I cannot say I know her.

2 Thess. 1:4-12 says: We are happy to tell other churches about your patience and complete faith in God, in spite of all the crushing troubles and hardships you are going through. This is only one example of the fair, just way God does things, for he is using your sufferings to make you ready for His kingdom, while at the same time, He is preparing judgement and punishment for those who are hurting you!

And so, I would say to you, who are suffering, God will give you rest along with us, when the Lord Jesus appears suddenly from heaven, in flaming fire with his mighty angels, bringing judgement on those who do not wish to know God, and who refuse to accept his plan to save them through our Lord Jesus Christ.

They will be punished, in everlasting hell, forever separated from the Lord, never to see the glory of his power, when he comes to receive praise and admiration, because of all he has done for his people, his saints. And you will be among them praising him, because you have believed what we told you about him.

And so, we keep on praying for you that God will make you as good as you wish you could be! ~ rewarding your faith with His power. Then everyone will be praising the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, because of the results they see in you: and your greatest joy will be that you belong to him. The tender mercy of our God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, has made all this possible for you.

If you "Trust in God" then you will let him put into place His plans, for judgement and vengeance on the people who did the September 11 atrocities.

In Nigeria, if you "Trust in God" then you will let him put into place His plans, for judgement and vengeance on the people who did the murders of 50 Christians worshipping inside the church last Sunday. His plans will be perfect and his judgement will be just and permanent!

Why? because the Word says: "vengeance is mine sayeth the Lord"

Isa 59:17: For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloak.

Isa 59:18: According to *their* deeds, accordingly he will repay, fury to his adversaries, recompense to his enemies; to the islands he will repay recompense.

CHAPTER 47: SHOULD CHRISTIANS GET INVOLVED IN POLITICS?

With the world in lockdown over the last 24 months, and governments making unilateral decisions, which affect all people in their nations, is it right for Christians to get involved in Politics?

Well, the short answer is YES!

There are many examples in scripture where God Almighty told his prophets to go to the King, or to the High Priest, or to the Governor, or to the people in the Temple, and to tell them that they were not following God's Laws, and that if they did not repent, there would be consequences and/or punishment ~ even wars and captivity.

The recent events over the last 10 years in Australia, clearly indicates that these warnings have not been taken seriously by the Australian Prime Ministers, State Premiers, government officials, or the judiciary.

As a result of turning our back on God's Laws, the governments have declared that ***"they know better than God"*** and have implemented laws which are clearly contrary to God defined laws. As written in the Bible.

These laws include:

a) **Abortion on demand** ~ which is "legalized murder" of an unborn child.

b) **Same Sex relationships** ~ deemed to be legal and called "Marriage" when God Almighty clearly defines **"Marriage"** as **"a Holy Estate before God, between a man and a woman"**, for the purpose of child bearing.

c) **Euthanasia:** "Assisted suicide" for the elderly, so that the government does not have to pay for their medical expenses in their old age.

d) **Transgender education in schools**. God Almighty only made two genders ~ "Male and Female", He made them. Nowhere in scripture, in the 5,000 years of biblical history does it show a man becoming a female. *It does however clearly state that homosexuality is an abomination in the sight of God and in the Book of Revelation it lists homosexuality as one of the many unrepentant sins which will prevent a person entering into heaven.*

All of the above items, listed are for our welfare, and for our correction, so that we as a nation, do not suffer the consequences of God's Laws, which have been established for millenniums. Even our Australian Constitution, recognizes that God Almighty is supreme by including references to Him, in the preamble of our Constitution.

The Preamble:

Whereas the people of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Queensland, Western Australia, and Tasmania, humbly relying on the blessing of Almighty God, have agreed to unite in one indissoluble Federal Commonwealth under the Crown of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and under the Constitution hereby established:

And whereas, it is expedient to provide for the admission into the Commonwealth of other Australasian Colonies and possessions of the Queen:

Note: This is how The Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory were added into the Commonwealth, as sovereign territories of the Queen.

In recent weeks, we have seen masses of men and women out on the streets because one black man was killed by an arresting officer. While I do not condone any form of killing in custody, we have not seen the same people out protesting against abortion ~ *the killing of innocent unborn black children*, nor do we see them out of the streets protesting against the killing of Christians in Iraq, Iran, Syria, Nigeria, or in some African countries ~ which is killing on religious grounds.

Now we have had "feminine activists" who claim that their body is their own property & therefore they can do what they like with it. But when they have an abortion, they do not kill their own bodies, they kill the body of an unborn child, whose legal rights they ignore. Therefore, they themselves are practising discrimination ~ their rights, against the rights of an unborn child.

We have the LGBQTI activists, saying that they want to be able to "love" whoever they choose, and they want that "love" to be recognised, like any other married couple. Well unfortunately, they forget or ignore the scriptures and confuse "love" with "lust."

All of these issues are clearly defined in scripture.

Now we get to the heart of the issue, should the Christians get involved in politics?

Well, Romans chapter 13 clearly states that God does not allow any leader, in any nation, to be placed into leadership without God's approval.

So, what can we learn from this? God Almighty is involved in the politics of every nation on earth. Therefore, if we who call ourselves Christians, are not involved in politics, we are not following God's example, we are in fact in rebellion against God's word. This may

come as a surprise to many people in Christian leadership, who want to keep politics and religion separate. That attitude is not biblical!

Some people say that there is a separation between religion and the state, but they have never taken the trouble to find out what that law says and for what reason it was established in the first place.

In countries where there is a law about a separation of religion and the state, it is for the following reason. It is so that **"the state"** cannot tell **"religion"** what they **"can do"** and what **"they cannot do."**

In fact, in recent months, just about every nation which has this law in place has violated it, by telling the church that they must close their buildings, and they must not come to worship in numbers more than 10 people.

Here in Australia, the church leadership of almost all denominations, rolled over without question, and closed their churches, and did not have meetings of people in groups more than 10, as specified by the government.

We did not see Christian leaders on television telling the government that what they were doing was wrong, nor did they ask their followers to come out into the streets to protest the government's actions with thousands of Christians marching down the streets chanting Christian slogans, to heal the sick, clothe the naked, and provide food for the poor.

Yes, some denominations did actually pray for the sick, they did provide emergency clothing and medicines for the needy, and food parcels for the isolated, but it was under the instructions and procedures of the government lockdown.

So, what can we expect for our lack of obedience to God's word, and our refusal to point out the government's mistakes?

God will continue to send prophets to warn us of our wrongdoing!

God will still love us unconditionally! but;

God will remove His blessings from our nation, because of our disobedience!

This will continue under God's grace and mercy, but as the scriptures tell us ~ after grace & mercy, comes judgement!

Like God Almighty did with prophet Jeremiah, telling the nation of Israel, every day, on the steps of the Temple in Jerusalem, of their sins as a nation, for 23 years, so will God warn us!

But after these warnings comes the judgement. In the case of Israel, it was the destruction of their cities, many killed by war, others by disease, and others by famine. The survivors were taken into captivity by the King of Babylon, where they lived in captivity for 70 years, before being allowed to return to their homeland.

Now, I do not know what God's "punishment plans are for Australia," but one thing I do know for sure, is that God **"says what He means, and means what He says."**

Therefore, there will be warnings, grace, mercy and then judgement for Australia, unless we heed the warnings, and as a nation, repent and change our wicked ways.

I trust the leadership of the churches in this nation will take it upon themselves to stand up and be counted, and bring this nation back to God, by their righteous preaching, teaching, and lifestyles, and by their actions, convince the governments to repeal any laws which do not line up with God's Holy Word.

Remember, where there is UNITY, God commands a blessing. This also applies to our government & their laws.

Where is disunity in the laws (some obey God's word & some do not) God cannot and will not, go against His word and bless this nation.

Only history will tell if Australia listened to the word of His Prophets, and took the appropriate actions, to cleanse this nation of its sins.

CHAPTER 48: SHOULD WE FOLLOW MAN, OR SHOULD WE FOLLOW GOD'S WORD?

Today, I wish to put before the readers, some ethical questions.

If a business develops rules and regulations, which are contrary to the law of the land in which they reside, what should an employee do?

1. Should they ask for a meeting with management to discuss these rules and point out the errors, which are causing their employees to possibly be punished by the law of the land; or,
2. Should they ignore the business rules and follow the law of the land; or
3. Should they just leave the company and look for another company, where the rules and regulations of that new company, honour the law of the land?

Similarly, if a church organization says that **Same Sex Marriage** is OK, when you know that the Word of God clearly says that homosexuality is an abomination in the sight of God, what should you do?

1. Should they ask for a meeting with their pastor, or even the bishop, to discuss this and point out what the Bible says about this type of lifestyle?
2. Should they stay inside the religious organisation, and try to change the organisation's viewpoint, with prayer and supplication, and by witnessing and sharing the love of Jesus to these people, but not approving of their sin? Or;
3. Should they follow the scriptures and not soil their clothes, (by association), and "come out from among the wicked" of that church, as is indicated in the Book of Revelation, chapters 2 & 3?
4. Finally, is your eternal life more important, (as an individual) than the religious organisation, in which you fellowship?
5. Does God judge you by your religious affiliations, or by your life, and the fruit that you produce?
6. When Jesus appears in the clouds, will He find you as a **DISCIPLE**, that he accepts, or as a **BELIEVER** that he rejects?

John 15:16-26 says some very interesting things (Living Translation):

You didn't choose me! I chose you! I appointed you to go and produce lovely fruit always, so that no matter what you ask for from the Father; using my name, he will give it to you. I demand that you love each other, for you get enough hate from the world! But then, it hated me before it hated you.

The world would love you, if you belonged to it; ***but you don't*** *– for I chose you to come out of the world, and so it hates you. Do you remember what I told you? A slave is not greater than his master! So, since they persecuted me, naturally they will persecute you. And if they had listened to me, they would listen to you! The people of the world will persecute you because you belong to me, for they don't know God, who sent me.*

They would not be guilty if I had not come and spoken to them. But now they have no excuse for their sin. Anyone hating me is also hating My Father. If I had not done such mighty miracles among them, they would not be counted guilty. But as it is; they saw these miracles and yet they hated both of us – me and My Father.

This has fulfilled what the prophets said concerning the Messiah. 'They hated me without reason'.

But I will send you the Comforter – the Holy Spirit, the source of all truth. He will come to you from the Father and will tell you about me. And you must tell everyone about me, because you have been with me from the beginning.

There are some religious organisations that do great works, feeding the hungry, caring for the sick, and even changing lives. But Jesus said He came to change the hearts of men (and women) ~ NOT JUST TO DO "GOOD WORKS!"

An organisation can change a person's lifestyle, but if they have not changed that person's heart, told him about Jesus Christ, and led him to the cross of salvation, then that person is still an unbeliever, and still heading for an eternity in hell. Jesus commanded us to go out into the streets and lanes and **make disciples**.

Once we are obedient to that commandment, and bring people to Christ, He has promised that the Blood of Christ shall make them new creations, completely change their life's outlook. There will be a change, in fact a transformation in their lives.

Sadly, some religious organisations have lost their first love; their desire to bring people into the kingdom; to bring people to the foot of the cross; to see heart transformations in people; from the inside out; to start a new life in Christ.

I trust that the Holy Spirit will reveal to them ALL truth from God's word. Romans chapter 13 is very specific: **OBEY THE GOVERNMENT**, for God is the one who has **ALLOWED IT TO BE** put there. There is no government anywhere that God has not "allowed to be placed into power. So those who refuse to obey the laws of the land, are refusing to obey God, and punishment will follow.

For the policeman does not frighten people who are doing right; but those doing evil will always fear him. So, if you don't want to be afraid, keep the laws and you will get along well. The policeman is sent by God to help you. But if you do something wrong, of course you should be afraid, for he will have you punished. He is sent by God for that very purpose. Obey the laws then, for two reasons; first, to keep from being punished, and second, just because you know you should.

Selah! Stop! Pause! And think about that!

CHAPTER 49: SQUARE PEGS IN ROUND HOLES

Romans chapter 12 verse 6 states (NLT) *"God has given each of us the ability to do certain things well. So, if God has given you the ability to prophesy, ~~ then prophesy whenever you can; ~~ as often as your faith is strong enough, to receive a message from God."*

So, in today's language, God has given each of us a "talent," or "a gift" to do something very well – in fact better than others.

This talent God refers to as "ability," but unfortunately, many people do not know **<u>what their gift is</u>**, and so they are not available to use that gift for His glory. **So, there are two parts to this picture.**

The first part **is to identify what the special "ability" is that God has given to each of us**, and the second part **is the "availability" to use it for his glory**. So, there is **"ability"** and there is **"availability,"** and both have to come into play, so that God can be glorified.

Throughout the Bible, there are many examples of God choosing people to perform specific tasks, and we need to learn from them.

1. **Abraham:** Was called by God to come out of his country of ungodly people, with his wife, and all of his belongings, and be prepared to go to a land that God was going to show them. He did not tell them the name of this land, nor what type of people lived there; God just said it was "the Promised Land", and if Abraham was obedient and followed God's instructions, then his offspring would be as numerous as the stars in the heavens. God chose a man who had that **"special ability" to trust God in all situations.**
2. **Moses:** A man raised up in the Pharaoh's palace, with all of the education and benefits of a Prince of Egypt, but who fled into the desert to rule over scorpions and lizards, while God re-moulded Moses into the leader that God wanted him to be; a leader to go and tell Pharaoh to let the Israelites go, and then to lead them in the wilderness for 40 years. These people were rebellious, they did not follow God's laws, or his ways, and God was getting fed up with them. In fact, at one stage God told Moses He was going to destroy them all and start again. But Moses was a wise man; he argued with God and said that all of the surrounding nations knew that You brought the Israelites out of Egypt, and that God was going to lead them to the Promised Land, the same land that was promised to Abraham. If God destroyed the Israelites, they could claim that God was not able to do what He promised, and therefore He was not really God at all. Because of this argument, God withheld his hand of destruction against the Israelites, and Moses continued to rule and lead the nation for 40 years, until he was old, and then he transferred the leadership to God's appointed leader - Joshua.
3. **Joshua:** A born leader, who slept in the tabernacle from the time of its construction, and who heard the voice of God. He was charged with leading the Israelites into the Promised Land, and warring against all of the tribes and nations, who were living in this land. He was charged with **"taking possession of this land"** [the biblical boundaries

of Israel] and removing all of the evil tribes who dwelt there. So to fulfil this role successfully, Joshua had to be especially gifted as a **"Warrior Leader,"** a person who could listen to the voice of God, and then implement the strategies that God had downloaded for him to defeat the enemy.

To fulfil this type of leadership, neither of the previous leaders mentioned above, would have been successful performing this task. They would have been **"square pegs in round holes,"** and they would have been working in the flesh – not working with their God-given talents.

4. **David:** David was chosen as a Warrior King, to war against evil, and to prepare the hearts of the people, to build the Davidic Temple for God. He was a **"man after God's own heart,"** but unfortunately not perfect, so he was not permitted to build the Temple.
5. **Solomon:** On the other hand, Solomon realised that it was a great responsibility to rule the nation of Israel, and so He asked God for wisdom to rule the nation wisely, so that the whole nation walked in obedience before their God. God granted his request, and he was granted a double portion of wisdom. That was his **"special talent" – his wisdom,** and He led the nation in peace for 40 years – but like his father, he was not perfect, and there were consequences for his sins.

   As a result of Solomon's sins, in the reign of David's Grandson, the kingdom of Israel was torn apart by civil war, resulting in the kingdom being split into two distinct parts.

   The first part was the Levites (priests) and the Tribe of Judah, which remained loyal to the laws of God, and remained with Jerusalem, as their capital city.

   The second group of the **"10 rebellious tribes,"** set up their capital in Samaria, and they were to become a problem for Israel right up until this century, as they try to claim back their inheritance; the land promised to the descendants of Abraham.
6. In the first century, missionaries went out from Israel, to spread the word of God to the nations, with Apostles travelling to places like India, to spread the gospel. These were people that God called, who were no different from us. They were created in the image of God (just like us) and they were given special talents (just like us). The only difference is **that they identified what their gifts were, and used them**. As a result, Christianity has spread across the known world, until now we have more than 2 billion people, who proclaim Jesus as their Lord and Saviour.
7. But some of you reading this post will say; "They were ***"special people"*** and God called them to do this task."
8. The only thing that is **"different"** about them, is that they **"heard the call"** and they **"obeyed the call"**.

The challenge for all of us, is that we need to identify what special gift God has given to each of us. Whatever that gift is, big or small, we have to be prepared to be available to use it, whenever we get the chance, because whenever we use our "special gifts," we are being the hands and feet of Jesus on this earth, sharing His love to a lost world.

CHAPTER 50: STEPS OF FAITH

We have heard many sermons about faith and how people in the Old Testament were referred to in Hebrews chapter 11, as "men of faith".

But what is faith?

I believe the definition of faith is this:

F = Forsaking

A = All

I = I

T = Trust

H = Him

What are the steps of faith?

1. **Forsaking all**, means to cast aside all our lifelines, our anchors, our security blankets, and all our mind knowledge, and put our trust completely in Jesus Christ and His Word. **This is first step**. This is a step in our mind, but it is still the first step of faith.
   Now this first step must be transferred from the mind to the spirit part of man. There are many cases where people came to hear Jesus but when push came to shove, they were not prepared to take this next step.
   The scriptures recount that the rich young ruler came to Jesus and asked Him a question, as recounted in Matthew 19:16-24.

[16] And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?

[17] And he said unto him, *Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.*

[18] He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, *thou shalt do no murder, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not bear false witness,*

[19] *Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*

[20] The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?

21 *Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.*

22 *But, when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.*

23 *Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

[24] *And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel[4] to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.*

[25] *When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, who then can be saved?*

26 *But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.*

There are some interesting things to be identified in this short passage of scripture.

1. Firstly, the rich young ruler recognises that Jesus is a "good" man and addresses Him with respect.
2. He then asks Jesus: "What good things must I do to gain eternal life"?
   a. The young man recognises that bad things cannot get you into heaven, so he asks what "good" thing will get him into heaven?
   b. He was assuming that "it is by works, that one enters into heaven." Of course, all of us know that this is not the case! [Or do we?]
3. Jesus first asks Him why he called Jesus "good," but Jesus did not let him give an answer, but in traditional Rabbinical style replied with a statement which required and answer from the ruler.
   a. Jesus replied that only God can be called "Good."
   b. Jesus then explained that he must keep the commandments.
4. The ruler replied that he had kept all the commandments that Jesus had identified, since he was a very young boy.
5. Notice that Jesus does not say to him that he is lying, no, **Jesus challenges him to do a better thing than this**, to sell all that he has, and give it to the poor, and follow after Jesus, as one of His disciples.
   a. This young man believed God's word and had been following and obeying it, but the "Rhema of the Word" – doing it to the "letter of the law."
   b. Jesus was now challenging him to do one further step – to sell everything and follow Him.
   c. **This was a step of faith that the rich young ruler was not prepared to take.** He was not prepared to do the "Logos of the word."

[4] Actually, this is a mistranslation in the King James Bible, that Aramaic word is "Gamla" & it means rope.

    d. He was not prepared to step out of his security zone and put his faith in Jesus Christ. He was not prepared to follow the "love of the word."
    e. Unfortunately, there are many in the church today, who are in the same boat, as this rich young ruler. They want to know the word, be able to sprout it out like a parrot, but are unable to go the next step, and put it into practise.
6. To be a true follower of Jesus Christ there is a cost. It maybe a financial cost; it maybe that you have to give up your secular career, to "do the work of the ministry." It maybe that God wants you just to learn to trust Him, in all areas of your life, so that you can be the very best witness for Him, wherever you work, or play.
7. Whatever it is that God has called you to do, there will be a cost. But praise God, the rewards always outweigh the costs.

This series of scriptures were spoken by Jesus for two totally different reasons:
The first was to answer the rich young ruler's questions, and the second was to try to teach His disciples the importance of service to others, being more important than the observance of the Law.
In another series of scriptures, Jesus follows the same technique, but goes even further.
In the Book of John, chapter 11, we have the story of Mary, Martha and Lazarus.
This family lived in Bethany in Judea, just 7 miles outside of Jerusalem and a place Jesus loved to go and to rest and relax in their house.
Lazarus become sick and Mary & Martha sent Jesus a message saying that his good friend is ill, please come.
Why did Mary & Martha send Jesus a message to come?

1. Because both Mary and Martha knew who Jesus was, they had seen Him perform miracles before, healing the sick, making the blind to see, and casting demons out of affected people. They both knew in their minds and in their spirits, that Jesus could heal Lazarus, if He just got the message that Lazarus was sick.
2. Like the centurion, they believed that Jesus did not even have to come to their house to heal Lazarus, all He had to do was issue the command, and Lazarus would be healed.
3. Both of these people were at faith level 3.
    a. The knew who Jesus was,
    b. The believed He could heal the sick,
    c. They believed He could heal the sick, by just saying that Lazarus was healed, even from a distance away.

Upon hearing this news about Lazarus, I am sure that the disciples would have expected Jesus to leave immediately, and proceed to Bethany, to see Lazarus and heal him of his illness; but Jesus makes no attempt to leave.
The disciples would have assumed that this was because earlier that month people had tried to kill Him in Judea.
The disciples even remind Jesus that people had tried to kill Him in Judea, and suggested that He not go back there.
Again, we see that His disciples were looking at things in the secular realm, seeing things as the mind sees them, not letting their thoughts be directed into the spiritual realm, where God works, and where the victories take place.
Remember, **the spiritual realm controls the physical realm** – not the other way around.
Jesus upon hearing the news about Lazarus being sick, makes a statement which must have completely confused His disciples.
Jesus states in verse John chapter 11:4: **"The purpose of his illness is not death, but for the glory of God. I, the Son of God, will receive glory from this situation."**
From this information, the disciples may have been re-assured that Lazarus was sick, but he was not going to die.
Finally, after two days, Jesus says to His disciples: "Let's go to Judea." At this time, Jesus was not even in the same province, where Lazarus was living, but elsewhere, but already Jesus knew the outcome and that this outcome would bring glory and honour to God.
Jesus, knew by the Gift of Revelation Knowledge, that Lazarus had already died.

In verse 11, Jesus informs the disciples that Lazarus is sleeping. This again confirms to the Disciples that Lazarus is getting better. They reply encouraged: Great! he is sleeping, he will recover. They have misunderstood the situation completely!
Jesus then tells them in verse 14 that Lazarus was dead.
Now the disciples are completely confused – even at the secular level.

1. First, they get the message that Lazarus is sick,
2. Then, Jesus tells them: "The purpose of his illness is not death.
3. Then, Jesus tells them Lazarus is sleeping, meaning that he is getting better, but now,
4. Lazarus is dead.

In the secular realm that does not seem to make sense, but they forgot the second part of Jesus' statement: "**but for the glory of God. I, the Son of God, will receive glory from this situation."**
This situation will only make sense in the spiritual realm, because that is where the victory is.
Verse 14: "And for your sake, I am glad I was not there, for this will give you another opportunity to believe in Me. Come let us go to him."
Jesus delayed His departure, so that He could give His disciples an opportunity to increase their faith – to go to another spiritual faith level.
If He had gone earlier, He would have healed Lazarus and neither Mary, Martha, or the disciples would not have learnt anything new. They would have stayed at the same faith level.
From this situation, we have to learn, that sometimes when God delays, it is to prepare us to move to:

a) the next level of testing,
b) the next level of maturity,
c) or the next level of faith.

Upon hearing of the death of Lazarus, many of the Jewish leaders from Jerusalem had come down to Bethany to pay their respects to the family, and to console Mary and Martha. All of these people were operating purely in the physical realm, and therefore there could not be a victorious outcome.
When Martha heard that Jesus had arrived in the village, she went out to meet Jesus.
Martha greets Jesus with respect, but chides Him also.
"Sir, if You have been here, my brother would not have died!"
In this statement of faith, Martha declares that she believes that Jesus could have healed Lazarus from his illness and made him well.
This is a step 3 level of faith, the same level of faith she had when she sent the message to Jesus that Lazarus was ill.
But now look what happens: Martha moves up a faith level to level 4. She declares: **"And even now, its not too late, for I know that God will bring my brother back to life again, if You (Jesus) will only ask Him to"**.
She is stating her case at a new level of faith – but this is in the mind – not in her spirit?
Why do I say this? Because when Jesus confirms her statement that Lazarus will be raised back to life, (now) she declares that this will happen on the Day of Resurrection, not now. She did not have the faith (in her spirit) to believe that Jesus could raise Lazarus from the dead ~ right now!
It is one thing to have a high faith level in the mind, but it more important to have a high faith level in the spirit, because it is the spirit of God dwelling within us, which gives the power. It is our faith level in the spiritual realm which activates that power.
Jesus declares to Martha that He is resurrection and the life, anyone who believes in Him, even if he is dead, yet shall he live. He is given eternal life for believing in Me, and shall not perish.
We quote this now (after the cross) and think nothing about this, but remember this incident is **before the cross,** and Jesus was being prophetic, not only about Lazarus, but about Himself as well.

Jesus knew in His heart that He could raise Lazarus from the dead, because He had already done it twice before. Jesus also knew that when the time came, He would be able to raise Himself from the dead also.

Then Jesus asks Martha does she believe this? Her reply is one we should all be able to confess: "I believe you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one we have so long awaited". Elsewhere in scripture it states: If you believe in your heart (your spirit and not your mind) that Jesus is the Son of God, and confess it with your mouth, you shall be saved. Here we see Martha confirming her salvation faith.
Martha left Jesus, just outside the village and went back into her house to speak to Mary, to tell her that Jesus had come and wanted to see her.
When the Jewish leaders who had come to console Mary & Martha saw her leave rapidly, they thought she was off to the grave to mourn the loss of her brother, so they followed her, but they came face to face with Jesus instead.
Like Martha, Mary's first words were to chide Jesus, but also to confess her faith, that she believed that if Jesus had come earlier, He could have healed Lazarus of his sickness and he would not have died.
Here again, we see Mary at faith level 3.
When Jesus saw Mary weeping (in true grief) and the Jewish leaders wailing with her, He was moved with indignation and deeply troubled.
Why was He moved with indignation? In Jewish and eastern culture, it is traditional for the family to have professional wailers present at the ceremonies, to give the impression of grief.
I believe that Jesus perceived through the Gift of Discernment that the Jewish leader's grief was not genuine, and as such, they were hypocrites, as they were being seen to console Martha and Mary.
They were acting out to get reward from those around them, without any thought of the spiritual consequences.
Jesus then asks: Where is he buried?
Now comes the shortest scripture in the Bible: Jesus wept. But the question is this: For what reason was He weeping?

1. Was it because of His love for Mary & Martha and His friend Lazarus who has just died? Or
2. Was it because of the lack of faith of these two sisters, who believed who He was, who believed He could heal Lazarus, but who did not believe that he could raise him from the dead? Or
3. Was it because the lack of faith and understanding of His disciples, who also did not understand why Lazarus had to die? Or
4. Was it because of the hypocrisy of the Jewish leaders, who should have known who He was, and been expecting a miracle?

As they were moving towards the tomb the leaders were discussing the situation, as if Jesus was not even present.

1. Some said He was weeping because Lazarus was a great friend of Jesus.
2. Others were criticising Jesus: V37-38: He healed the blind man, why didn't He keep Lazarus from dying?

From these two comments above, we see that none of the Jewish leaders had any idea of the majesty and the power that Jesus was about to display.
Even they acknowledged that Jesus could heal a blind man, but they wondered why He allowed Lazarus to die. It did not fit with their spiritual concept, of who they thought Jesus was.
Because they were the Jewish leaders, the people charged with the responsibility for leading the Jewish people into the presence of God Almighty, their lack of faith and lack of understanding, it says that Jesus was moved with deep anger. He then moved to the tomb.
Jesus commands them to roll the stone aside because He has already determined what He must do recorded in verse 4, so that the Son of God maybe gloried.
Even though Martha had said that she believed that God would do anything that Jesus asked for, she was more worried about the smell of death, than the victory and miracle of life.
Jesus has to remind her of what He had told her outside the village. "Didn't I tell you that you will see a wonderful miracle from God if you only believe?

Verse 41: … Then Jesus looked up to heaven and said: "Father, thank You for hearing Me (You always hear Me, but I said it, so that these people gathered hear may Hear and know that You have sent Me)".
Notice nowhere in any of the Gospels reporting this event, do the writers indicate that Jesus prayed to His Father for this miracle to occur.
No, all it says that He knew that Lazarus must die, so that the Son of God could be glorified.
We can only assume that Jesus communed with His Father in the Spirit, and this spiritual communication, laid the plan and sequence of events, which must take place, so that the outcome of Lazarus being raised from the dead could come to pass, to give witness to Mary & Martha, as well all the Jewish leaders, who were gathered at the entrance of the tomb.
Now Jesus commands Lazarus to come forth!!!
Jesus was given "faith without limits". He knew, beyond all reasonable doubt, that when He gave this command, Lazarus would indeed come forth, wrapped in his burial clothes.
And Lazarus came forth, being still wrapped in his burial clothes.
Jesus commanded the people gathered there to unwrap him of his burial clothes. Why did Jesus tell the people to do this?
His spirit was alive, but his body was still wrapped for death. Both parts must be freed from death, before a person can once again operate and dwell upon this earth.
Many people today, believe in their hearts, believe in their spirits, but their actions are handcuffed, because their physical beings, are still under the earthly forces.
The scripture tells us that we have to die of self. More of Jesus and less of us. When we consciously do this, there is a revelation, and a revolution taking place in our lives. This allows the spirit that raised Jesus Christ from the grave, to not only dwell in us, but to operate in us, and through us, into the wider community at large.
So, the challenge today is this:

1. Do you know who Jesus is?
2. Do you believe that through His blood, you are redeemed to eternal life with Him?
3. Do you believe that the Holy Spirit that raised Jesus Christ from the dead dwells in you?
4. Do you believe that Jesus has called each of us by name, as stated by Apostle Paul in Romans 8:28b?
5. If so, what have you, as an individual, been called by God to do?
6. Have you stepped out in your spiritual faith, and activated God's plan in your life?
7. Is there evidence that your plan has been activated, by the physical evidence of signs and wonders following you?

The scripture says in John 15:16 that it is by our fruits that we shall be known. So, the challenge today is show me your fruit, to prove that you are in obedience to God's calling on your life. **These are the Steps of Faith.**

CHAPTER 51: STEPS TO SPIRITUAL MATURITY

In Ephesians chapter 4, Apostle Paul makes some things very clear about the Holy Spirit. Let us look carefully at what He has to say. (Living Bible)

Verse 11; *some of us (that means you and me) have been given special abilities as apostles; to others He has given the gift of being able to preach well; some (of you) have special abilities, in winning people to Christ, helping them to trust him as their Saviour; still others, have a gift of caring for God's people, as a shepherd does his sheep; leading them, and teaching them in the ways of God.*

Verse 12; *Why is it that He (the Holy Spirit) gives us these special abilities to do certain things best? It is that God's people will be equipped* ***to do better work for Him,*** *building up the church, the body of Christ, to a position of strength and maturity;*
Verse 13; *until* ***finally we all believe alike*** *about our salvation and about our Saviour, God's Son, and* ***all become full-grown in the Lord*** ***~~~*** *yes to a point of being filled full with Christ.*

Verse 14; *Then we will no longer be like children, forever changing our minds about what we believe, because someone has told us something different, or has cleverly lied to us, and made the lie sound like the truth.*

Verses 15, 16; *Instead, we will lovingly follow the truth at all times ~~ speaking truly, living truly ~~ and so become more and more, in every way, like Christ, who is the head of His body, the church. Under His direction the whole body is fitted together perfectly, and each part in its own special way helps the other parts, so that the whole body is healthy, and growing, and full of love.*

Apostle Paul identifies 5 special gifts, which the Holy Spirit gives to the Body of Christ, and He then explains **why** they are given, **so that the whole body of Christ can grow in spiritual maturity**, and so that each part of the Body (that is you and me) can find our own special place in that Body, so that we can function properly, so that the whole body moves forward together.

In 1 Corinthians chapters 12 and 14 Paul also identifies 9 other spiritual gifts, which are available to every disciple, and he urges each and every disciple to cry out to God for the gift of prophecy. But we will deal with this subject maybe at another time.

So, if we are to grow in spiritual maturity; from an unbeliever, to a believer, then to a disciple, and finally to a fully matured Christian, what are the steps to spiritual maturity?

Let us look as the steps.

Growing is Christ is like the steps on a step ladder, we have to start at the bottom and then take them one at a time.

This is how you reach spiritual maturity!

So, have you had any trials or tests recently? If not, it maybe because you have not identified your gifts, and are not walking in them, in obedience to God's word in your life.

When you are in obedience to God, trials and tests will come from the enemy, because **Satan fears people who are obedient to God's word!**

When you use your gifts in the body of Christ, as the Holy Spirit instructed you to use them, you are now walking in obedience to God.

What gifts do you have? How do you identify them? How do you activate your gifts? How do you use your gifts?

God has called you by name and according to His divine plan and purpose. You need to find out what your purpose is in the body of Christ. Where do you fit in ~ and then OBEY!

Now we have to be prepared to learn from the specially gifted people, referred to in Ephesians chapter 4.

Now we have to change, from being a believer, to becoming a disciple! Action is required!

If we repent of our sins, and be baptised, then we will receive the Holy Spirit. [Acts 2:38].

But if we hear God's word and respond to it, we become believers.

If we are not a believer, then sin still abounds in us, and the wages of sin is death, so we are bound for hell; that is our destination!

CHAPTER 52: STRONG'S CONCORDANCES' REFERENCES TO MARY MAGDALENE IN SCRIPTURE

This morning at the Dawn service, it was wrongly stated that it was Mary Magdalene who anointed Jesus with ointment in the celebration feast at the house of Mary, Martha and Lazarus, but clearly scripture proves that this is not the case. These types of scriptural errors need to be clarified and corrected.

Throughout the scriptures, Mary Magdalene is always referred to by her full name, so that there is no misunderstanding about which Mary is being referred to.

Verse	Scripture	Comments
Matt. 27:61	And there was Mary Magdalene and the other Mary (The mother of James the lesser, & of Joses and Salome) sitting over against the sepulchre.	Both Mary's are mentioned here, but not Mary (The Mother of Jesus.)
Matt. 28:1	In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn towards the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to the sepulchre.	
Mark 15:40	There were also women looking on afar off: among whom was Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of James the lesser, and of Joses, and Salome.	
Mark 16:1	And when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary, the mother of James and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint Him.	
Mark 16:9	Now, when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven devils	
Luke 8:2	And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils	
Luke 24:10	It was Mary Magdalene and Joanna, and Mary, the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things unto the apostles.	
John 11:1	Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha.	
John 11:2	(It was Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.)	**Verse 2 clarifies who it was who anointed Jesus with the ointment -- Not Mary Magdalene!**
John 19:25	Now there stood by the cross of Jesus, his mother (Mary), and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene	
John 20:1	The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and sees the stone taken away from the sepulchre.	
John 20:18	Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these things unto her.	

CHAPTER 53: SUMMARY ON THE BOOK OF JOB

1. The Book of Job is the first book ever written and recorded for inclusion in the Bible. In Biblical history, it precedes the 5 books written by Moses.
2. Job was the richest, most influential person in the East at the time he lived, not just the Middle East, but the East – all of these known countries at that time. Job had 7 sons and 3 daughters.
3. God has Board Meetings in Heaven, and all the archangels are to come and present their reports before God Almighty. Therefore, Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, and Lucifer had to make their reports to God Almighty.
4. Because Lucifer (now known as Satan) was an archangel, he still had the right to appear before God Almighty at these meetings, as his new title was "Prince of the Air." This was because Adam had given away all the authority that God Almighty had given to him, when he rebelled against God, and ate the forbidden fruit in the garden.
5. **At this first recorded Board Meeting**, God asks Satan about Job, but Satan replies that Job is too well protected by God, but if that protection is removed Satan believes that Job will curse God. God agrees to the test, and sets the limits of the testing of Job. **Satan must only work within the limits that God allows Him to use!**
6. **The First Test:** God allows Satan to kill his children, and all of his livestock and destroy all of his harvests, so that he is no longer the richest man in the East, but now the poorest man in the East. Some people rely on their wealth for their security, but still Job did not curse God.
7. This is then followed by a **Second Board Meeting in Heaven,** in which God again enquires of Satan about Job and what had happened to him. Satan replies that all has been removed from him, but he has not cursed God, but Satan goes on to say that if his health is attacked, he will curse God. God agrees to the test and sets the limits of the testing of Job. Satan must only work within the limits that God allows Him to use. **God Almighty makes it very clear that Satan must not kill him!**
8. Job is attacked by sores and boils all over his body, which become infected and puss oozes out of them, but still Job does not curse God.
9. It was at this stage that Job's wife makes accusations against Job. Job's wife was happy and proud to be Job's wife when they were rich and famous, but now that they are very poor and Job is racked with health problems Job's wife starts complaining and accusing Job for his faith in God. She says that Job should curse God and this test will be over. Job replies that we take the good days from God without complaint, so why not also take the bad days from His without complaint also? Throughout these two tests Job did not sin against God.
10. Word gets around that Job is now destitute and his 3 friends come to visit him, to see if this news is true. They are astounded at what they see, and they sit in silence with Job for seven days, to support Job in his trials and difficulties.
11. Job now starts to cry out and state his case about what has happened to him, but one by one his three "friends" start to make accusations against him.
12. They say that even though Job prayed for his children every day, for their known sins and for their unknown sins, they must have done something wrong, otherwise God would not have taken their lives. These friends did not understand that Satan took their lives, but the test is for Job, not for his children.
13. Job says that we must never blame fate when things go wrong. They may seem to be going wrong, but God works all things in our live for our good (even the bad things!) so He trusts God for the outcome to this situation. We know that this is confirmed in the New Testament in 1 Corinthians 10:13, where it states that we will never be tested beyond our level of faith. God also promised that you will have a way of escape. After each test there will be victory and a testimony. Remember, you cannot have a testimony without first having the test!
14. Job then says to his friends: What a blessing when God corrects you – He takes you to a new level of understanding of who He is, and who He wants you to become.
15. Job also says that God is perfect and we are imperfect, so how can we ever become a person who is acceptable for God. His friend responds that if you get down on your knees and confess to God He will listen to your prayers and come running to restore you and set everything right again.

16. All the way through the discussions and the accusations of Job's three friends, Job's responses always give glory and honour to God, he never sins.

CHAPTER 54: METHOD FOR THE PREPARATION OF A SERMON

INTRODUCTION

The secret to good teaching and preaching is the ability to be able to prepare a sermon in such a way, that it is easy to transfer what you want to say, to others who are listening.

NOTE :- Before you commence to prepare any sermon, or text, get down on your knees and commit this time and work to the Lord, asking Him to send the Holy Spirit, to give you the knowledge, and the method, of preparing the sermon, so that all the knowledge and glory is given unto Him.

1. **Identify the single most important point that you want to say in your sermon [it should be the climax of your address].**
2. **Select a Scripture or Scriptures that builds towards this point.**
3. **Give illustrations, stories, examples, events, quotes, etc... that help build and reinforce to this point.**
4. **Identify the response that you anticipate/desire, AND remember to create enough momentum, to take you past the POINT onto a RESPONSE! from those listening to the sermon.**

Example Sermon:

1. **Point = " Women are precious to the Living God "**
2. **Scriptures;**
   - **Genesis: 'God made man & WOMAN'**
     - Woman was God's making
   - **Famous Women in the Bible**
     - Women have worth, Women are allowed to Minister.
3. **Stories of Famous Women (Billy Graham's Mother)**
   - Stories of how Women have suffered because men did not respect the Giftings & Ministries that God Himself has placed in them.
   - Personal Testimony of dealing with false worth, and embracing God's worth of yourself.
4. **Talk about how these truths apply and ask for response**
   - Women who have an unsaved husband are still of value (1. Cor. 7)
   - Women who feel neglected, are still of value
   - Women who have suffered abuse, are still of value.

CLEARLY EXPLAIN THAT: ***** Suffering for the Gospel is NOT THE SAME as suffering CRUELTY, from an abusive relationship *****

- Women who know God has touched their life, BUT, never stepped forward, or have held back.

CLOSE: Invite people to respond;

- Women who understand what you have said and feel they need someone to stand in prayer with them.
- Men who God is touching - TO CHANGE their thinking.
- PRAY THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT DESCENDS ON THOSE PRESENT, AND CHANGES THEIR SPIRITUAL ENVIRONMENT, FOR HIS GLORY.

CHAPTER 55: IN HEAVEN IT MAYBE HELL FOR SOME PEOPLE!

Firstly today, I want to get some simple answers from you, the congregation as we start this sermon.

1. Hands up all who believe there will come a time in the future, when Jesus will return to the earth - to His kingdom, and take up residence here? Some of you put up their hands, that is good.
2. You will notice I did not say that Jesus was coming again to establish His kingdom here on the earth - **but rather to take up residence in it.**

3. Why the distinction between the two ? Well that answer will be obvious to many of you already. If Jesus has to come again to establish His Kingdom on the earth - then it means that His kingdom does not exist on earth at the moment. This means that Jesus is not in control - Jesus did not defeat Satan!
4. But you say - Hang on a minute! We all know that Jesus conquered death, preached to the unsaved in hell, rose from the grave, and was victorious over Satan, placing Him under His feet forever.
5. If you believe this, then the Kingdom of Heaven must already exist here on earth today.
6. When we pray the Lord's prayer, we are in fact proclaiming this fact when we say: Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth (as it already is being done) in Heaven.
7. When we accept Jesus Christ into our hearts, the kingdom of heaven exists here on earth. Whether we are good examples of this kingdom, depends on whether we allow God's will to be done in our hearts - as it already is being done in heaven.
8. But more importantly, I want to ask you what you think we are going to be doing when Jesus returns to earth for 1,000 years, and then later when we go to be with Him forever.
9. The Scriptures tell us that we will rule and reign over nations as joint heirs with Him, here on this "existing earth".
10. Then God destroys this heaven and earth, awakes from His creation slumber of Genesis chapter two. (Remember there is an evening but no morning of the Seventh day) to creates a New Heaven (with no sun or moon – because the light of Jesus will be sufficient) and a New Earth, (which has no sea.)
11. So, do you think that you are going to sit around on clouds, playing harps, and singing continually before God?
12. Have you ever thought about what you are going to be doing in Heaven for eternity?
13. What jobs will you be assigned to do? There will be no farmers, because God already said in the Book of Revelation that the trees along the banks of the river of life will produce their fruit, every month, no-one will be ever hungry again.
14. There will be no need for doctors, dentists, nurses or undertakers, because there will be no sickness, or death. So, many people will have to learn new skills, or finally identify the skills and gifts, that God has already bestowed upon them.
15. So, this morning, I hope I have challenged you to go and research more about what you can expect to be doing in Heaven.
16. SO IT MIGHT BE A GOOD IDEA TO ALSO RESEARCH WHAT YOU WILL BE DOING IF YOU END UP IN HELL, BECAUSE EVEN THE DEMONS DID NOT WANT TO GO THERE!

CHAPTER 56: THE 4 MAIN ATTRIBUTES OF GOD ALMIGHTY

As we study the scriptures it becomes very clear that God Almighty has four main attributes. These are; LOVE, GRACE, MERCY & JUDGEMENT.

God Almighty set Israel apart as an **"example nation"**, to show the rest of the world what happens to a nation that obeys God's Laws (in all respects), and what happens to a nation that does not obey God (in all respects).

The scripture tells us that "God IS Love", and He expresses that Love towards Israel (His Bride) whether they obey Him or not. God's love towards Israel never changes ~ but His blessings DO!

In the Benediction, we say: May the LOVE of God (the Father), and the GRACE of our Lord, (Jesus Christ), and the Fellowship (Mercy) of the Holy Spirit be with us all, (and our families) until we meet again, AMEN.

Now let us look at what happened to Israel throughout their history, because Israel is the "example Nation" for us all, and the same consequences which happened to Israel can, **and will happen,** to every nation upon the earth, because God's word never changes.

1. *When the leaders of the nation of Israel were obedient to God's laws* and *when the people of Israel were obedient to God's laws*, there was **peace and prosperity in the land**, as God blessed the nation.
2. *When the leaders of the nation of Israel were not obedient to God's laws*; but *the people of Israel were still obedient to God's laws*, then **the GRACE of God came**

into play, and God sent prophets to the leaders of Israel to warn them, of their sins and to REPENT of their sins, to allow God to once again, bless their nation.

3. *When the leaders of the nation of Israel, AND the people of Israel were both not obedient to God's laws*, when they went after other gods, then **God's MERCY was brought down upon the nation**. Now the prophets came, not only to tell the leaders and the priests, but also the people of their sins, and that the nation needed to REPENT before the Lord.
4. **If they refused to listen**, then God would send a **"Warning prophet"** like, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, or Daniel, to the Nation of Israel, to give them their last warnings, before **JUDGEMENT WAS TO BE RELEASED UPON THEM**.
5. If you look in the scriptures, you will see that God gave Jeremiah a message for the Nation of Israel, every day, for 23 years, either to the kings, or to the priests, or the people of Israel, warning them of their sins and telling them of what is to come, as punishment, because they refused as a nation, to repent before God Almighty.
6. It would first start internally, with internal friction and disputes, disruptions to their peaceful lifestyles. This would be followed by floods, fires, earthquakes, volcanoes, famine and disease. All the while during this time, the prophets would be **WARNING the people** of what is to come, if they refuse to REPENT as a nation, before Almighty God.
7. And we know that the Nation of Israel refused to listen to the warnings of Prophet Jeremiah, and that there arose false prophets, who said the opposite things to God's true words, and they convinced the authorities to put Jeremiah in prison.
8. *But God's true prophet was speaking God's true words,* **and God raised an army from the north** (the Babylonian army) **to bring destruction upon Jerusalem, and all of the towns of Judah.**
9. As was prophesied, only the people who went out and surrendered to the Babylonians would be safe. Those who remained inside Jerusalem, or the other cities in Judah, would all be killed, either by the sword, or by famine, or by disease.
10. Those who fled to Egypt, would also be despised and killed. And it came to pass, exactly as Jeremiah had prophesied. Those who stayed in the towns and cities were all killed. Those who fled to Egypt were all killed. The only ones who lived, were the ones who surrendered to the Babylonians, to be taken off into **CAPTIVITY.**

So many people reading this will say; "So what? That was the nation of Israel, more than 3,000 years ago ~ it does not apply to our nation today". ***But they would be wrong!!!***

God Almighty "set the nation of Israel apart", to be the **"example nation"**, to be a **"witness nation"** for all of the nations of the earth.

According to God's timing, what happened to Israel, will also happen to **YOUR nation, if you fail to repent of your national sins!**

Here in Australia, there have been ***prophets, evangelists and teachers, crying out for righteousness to be returned to the Australian State and Federal Governments, for more than 40 years*** ~ and for the Nation's governments, to obey and follow God's Laws ~ **<u>but the Leaders have not listened!</u>**

We have now seen these same governments, enact laws which are contradictory to God's Laws, as written in the scriptures. These include;

1. **Abortion on Demand**, where the government now allows "legal murder" of innocent unborn children, completely ignoring the legal rights of the unborn children ~ and their shed blood cries out for Justice!
2. **Euthanasia (assisted suicide)** of a person because they want to die "comfortably". **God Almighty numbers the days of our lives**, not some ill-informed government.
3. **Both of these laws contravene the commandment, which states "THOU SHALT NOT MURDER."**
4. Then we have the **Same-Sex Marriage Law**, where the government "thinks it knows better than God does", by contradicting God's definition of marriage, which clearly states that ***"Marriage is a holy estate before God, between a man and a woman, for childbearing".***

5. **Homosexuality is defined by God "as an abomination in His sight"**, therefore;

a. It could never be "a holy estate before God",

b. It is not "between a man and a woman", so it does not meet the criteria of a "marriage".

c. It does not, and cannot "create childbirth".

d. Therefore, in God's eyes, it is a "lustful relationship", [not a love relationship], contrary to God's laws, and as stated in the Book of Revelation, it is one of the unrepentant sins, which will prevent a person from entering into heaven.

So, what does it mean for the Nation of Australia right now?

1. We have been blessed by the **LOVE** of God as a nation for over 100 years since Federation.
2. But we, (as a nation), have turned away from the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, by allowing other gods to be worshipped in our midst. Just like King Solomon, we have allowed mosques and Buddhist temples, to be erected in the Great Southland of the Holy Spirit. We have started to worship other gods. We no longer keep the Sabbath holy, by allowing businesses to be conducted on the Sabbath Day. And all the while, the church leadership has remained silent!
3. In 2008 when the GFC hit and almost crippled other nations, Australia was covered by God's **GRACE** and did not go into recession, like other nations ~ we still had a small growth.
4. In 2011, we had the inland Tsunami in Toowoomba, and historic floods in the Lockyer Valley, and onwards into Brisbane, with lives lost and major infrastructure and property damage.
5. Since then, we have had major floods, bushfires, and earthquakes, to wake us up, as these warnings were also given to the nation of Israel, to clearly show His displeasure at their disobedience of His laws, and their refusal to turn from other gods. This is God's **MERCY** being shown to us.
6. Now in 2020, we have **DISEASE,** which is the Covid-19 pandemic, causing death. Even now, we can see God's **MERCY** still prevailing upon us, as our ratio of deaths per 1 million people, is significantly less than other nations.
7. But still, we refuse to heed the warnings of the prophets, so we must prepare ourselves for what is to come upon us, in the future ~ famine, destruction, and captivity unless we repent as a nation. **Remember judgement begins with the Body of Christ ~ the Church!**
8. We are now forbidden for having meaningful church services, having been limited to a maximum of 20 people. **The persecution of the Church in Australia has started**, **even if you are not aware of it ~ yet.**
9. Yes, you can have "Live Streaming", and "Zoom Meetings", but that just means that whatever you say or do is recorded and analysed by the **"Thought Police"**, to see whether it lines up with the modern agenda of the government, or not!
10. It also means that every person who is watching the "Live Streaming", or "Zoom Meetings" are also known by their IP address, and you can now be placed on a "Religious Watch List".
11. And still the Church Leadership in Australia is asleep! They have been asking: "Why did the prophets not warn us that the pandemic was coming"? And the answer is that they did! But the church leadership were either asleep; or did not want to listen, or heed their warnings!
12. They were "not prepared to hear the truth", because if they did open their "spiritual ears" to hear the truth, THEN **"they would have to deal with the truth"!**
13. So, where are we now? I believe that God Almighty is still giving us time to REPENT AS A NATION. His Mercy is still in operation, BUT it will not be in operation forever!
14. According to God's perfect timing, **Punishment and Captivity shall befall this nation**, **IF WE DO NOT REPENT!** I do not know when, or how it shall occur, but God will send His Warning Prophet to this nation, just as He did for Israel before they went into Captivity.
15. **NOW IS THE TIME FOR THE CHURCH TO WAKE UP OUT OF ITS SLEEP, REPENT, AND TURN BACK TO HIM, BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE!**

CHAPTER 57: THE RISE, FALL & RISE, OF THE APOSTOLIC MINISTRIES IN THE BODY OF CHRIST

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

In Ephesians chapter 4, commencing at verse 10, Apostle Paul reveals some interesting revelations under the power and anointing of the Holy Spirit.

*He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fulfil all things. And **he gave some, apostles**; and **some, prophets**; and **some, evangelists**; and **some, pastors and teachers**; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.*

Jesus ascended into heaven: ***so that He might fulfil all things!***

Therefore, the giving of the Apostolic Ministries to the Body of Christ, was part of that fulfilling of the commandments of His Father, so that the Body of Christ, could do certain things, which are identified in the following verses of scripture.

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

Who gave these to the Body of Christ? Jesus Christ Himself – under the power of the Holy Spirit.

Notice this is a God-given office, not a "man- appointed office"!

As has been seen many times in the past, and the Old Testament, whenever "man" steps into a role which belongs to God, problems start to happen. So, it is with the 5-fold ministry gifts referred to here.

The leadership of the "denominations" in the Body of Christ, tried to restrict the impact and the use of these offices within the Body of Christ, even stating that they died out with the first-generation apostles. Of course, they did not read further into these verses, because if they did, they were stating that that these offices were no longer needed in the Body of Christ, because we had now all reached maturity in Christ Jesus, we were all in unity, and that there was perfection in the Body of Christ, as the bride "without blemish" which Christ is coming back to claim.

Of course, any blind Freddy, would know that that is definitely not the case; with violence, sexual abuse, gossip and adultery, all rife in the Body of Christ, some of the offences even being suppressed by church leadership, because it is too close to home, to deal with effectively.

For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.

"For the perfecting of the saints": Do we need these gifts in the church today to continue to "perfect the saints," or do we all claim to be perfect?

The obvious answer is "Yes," we do still need them operating in the Body of Christ today.

"For the work of the ministry": Is the work of the ministry finished on earth? No, therefore we still need them operating in the Body of Christ today.

"For the edifying of the body of Christ." Is the Body of Christ fully edified today? No, therefore we still need them operating in the Body of Christ today.

"Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

"Till we all come in the unity of the faith": Is there unity of faith in the Body of Christ in your city, your state, your country? The honest people would have to declare NO!!! Therefore, we still need them operating in the Body of Christ today.

"And of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man": Does everybody on earth know about Jesus Christ as the Son of God and as a perfect man? No, therefore we still need them operating in the Body of Christ today.

"Unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ": Has everybody in your church reached the stature and fullness of measure in Christ? No, therefore we still need them operating in the Body of Christ today.

"That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive":

The fact that Paul refers to the church as children, clearly indicates that we are not mature, easily swayed by false doctrine, craftiness and the deceivers, who are in the church leadership, waiting to steer people away from the truth. All very good reasons for having these offices actively working in the Body of Christ today.

If we look at the early first & second-generation churches, they grew and become mature, even in spite of hardship and persecution, because the 5-fold ministries were in active operation, within the Body of Christ, and the church leadership fully understood the reasons why they were there, and from whose authority they were operating.

The rise of the Catholic church and the suppression of Church truth, resulted in "man" taking over the leadership role within the church. As a result, there were church splits (clearly not unity), kingdoms fought against kingdoms for power, the truth of the Bible was suppressed into a dead language (Latin) and only able to be revealed to the congregation by so called "learned priests."

When people like Tyndale had a revelation from God to make the Bible known by translation into the "local language", the "earthly Priesthood" put out contracts to have them killed.

But God is still in control Hallelujah!!! Because He could not get His message out through the established channels, they were bypassed, and **God Almighty raised up new channels to use to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ.**

With revelation comes revolution!!!

This happened in the 17 & 1800's and then later in the 1900's and later in the 20th century.

Now in the 21st century God Almighty is flexing His spiritual muscles once again. The established churches still refuse to promote the Fruit of Spirit, for the development of the individual believer, to become a disciple, nor do they actively encourage the 9 gifts of the Holy Spirit, to freely operate within their churches.

They have forgotten that it is **not "their" church,** but the Church belongs to Jesus Christ, He purchased it with His blood.

Until the Body of Christ, - "the church" gets this revelation that the church will not grow until, these offices are:

Actively recognised by the church leadership;

Actively encouraged to work within the Body of Christ;

Invited to participate in seminars, to reveal the plans and purposes of God; to the wider body of the leadership.

Encouraged to teach and equip leadership, within the Body of Christ, for the plans and purposes of God in the 21st century.

Then unfortunately, the church will remain stagnated (like the Jews) wandering around in the wilderness for 40 years, until all that generation have died and God raises up a new generation to fulfil His divine purposes on earth, before He returns to claim His perfect bride.

Which generation do you want to belong to?

PART 2: THE RISE OF THE APOSTOLIC MINISTRY –

In part 1 (The Rise, fall and rise of the Apostolic Ministry), I identified that the Lord was starting to re-educate people about the reasons why the 5-fold ministries were placed into the Body of Christ.

Moving on from that, let us now examine why the Lord has placed a spiritual template in place, for the leadership within the Body of Christ.

In the Old Testament, there were leaders appointed by Kings, and there were leaders appointed and commissioned by God Almighty Himself.
The Pharaoh was appointed by man, but Moses was appointed, and commissioned by God, to go back into Egypt and take the Jews out of the nation of Egypt.
When people who are called by God Almighty, and commissioned by Him, are obedient to their divine calling, God moves mountains, to allow them to achieve their objectives, and give the glory back to God Almighty.
Without the obedience of Moses, the nation would not have been freed from the persecution, slavery, and sin, of the Egyptian nation, of that time.
In Isaiah chapter 22, we see that Shebna had been appointed the Governor of Jerusalem by man, (the king) and was building a name for himself (and riches for himself), and not giving the glory of his office, nor was he honouring the Lord.
In verse 15, God commands Isaiah to give Shebna a message, which was straight from the throneroom of God. "Who do you think you are, building this beautiful sepulchre in the rock for yourself?"
God says in this message, that God allowed Shebna to be elevated to this high position, but because he had not honoured God in this position, it was to be taken away from him.
God tells Isaiah, that God Himself, will appoint somebody to replace Shebna, and that person will be loyal and responsible to God – not to man!
In the early churches, God appointed people, and commissioned them as apostles to go break new ground, plant churches, and set the spiritual template of leadership in place.
In 1 Corinthians 12: 18 Apostle Paul writes these words: ***"But now, has God set the members, every one of them in the Body, as it pleases Him".***
"*But now*" refers to <u>all time</u>, the past, the present and the future.
"***Has God (himself) set the members – everyone on them- as it has pleased Him"***
Whereabouts in this scripture, does it say that the (Pope or the Archbishop of Canterbury, or any other denominational official,) sets the members in the Body? **NOWHERE!!!**
Apostle Paul is clearly prophesying here, of things to come, which are not according to God's plan and purpose for His church.
Notice that it says: ***"As it pleases Him."***
If we don't follow God's template, then how can we please God? The obvious answer is that we cannot!!!
If we cannot please God, then how do we expect to reach maturity? The answer is simple; we never will; ~ unless we repent, and go back to the Word of God, and do exactly what it says in His word. ***Obedience is better than sacrifice!!!***
In 1 Corinthians 12:28 Paul, under the anointing of the Holy Spirit, lays out clearly, the spiritual template of leadership in the Church Body.
"God has set some in the Church Body": Who has set? Not man – but God Almighty Himself. This is God's appointments, and this is God's hierarchy of leadership.
"***<u>First</u>*** *apostles":* These are God's appointed leaders within the Body of Christ, who have been given the authority, to break new ground, plant, lead and perfect the Body of Christ.
"<u>Secondly</u> *prophets":* The Apostle and the prophet, set up the spiritual leadership, of the Body of Christ within a nation, state or region.
Notice there is no mention in the Bible of denominations, [just the Body of Christ], nor is there mention of any fences in heaven [just complete and harmonious unity].

Denominationalism is a satanic idea, placed into the minds of man, to cause division, grief and destruction, among the Body of Christ and prevent it from reaching its ultimate glory.

"<u>Thirdly</u> *teachers":* Teachers of the Word of God, are to change ***"believers"*** into ***"disciples,"*** and then move them to a place of maturity in the Body of Christ, so that the Apostle and the Prophet can ***"equip them for the work of the ministry."***
"After that, miracles": There should be people raised up in the Body of Christ, who are recognised as "miracle workers," because of the fruit of their ministries.

"Then, Gifts of Healings": This is not restricted to the leadership of the Body of Christ, this is available to all who earnestly desire spiritual gifts.
"[*Then] the gift of Helps":* This is one of the most important gifts in the Body of Christ, because the gift of helps, are the people who grease the wheels and keep the Body of Christ moving, on a daily basis.
In many instances they are the unseen forces, the humblest of people, who just see a need and get in there and do it – not waiting to be told, not wanting any applause, nor recognition, but just knowing that they are doing all they can, to give glory and honour to God, because they know that they are building up treasures in heaven.
"[Then] the gifts of government [administration]: Here again are people raised up and gifted by God Almighty to make sure that all the "legal issues" are undertaken, who make sure that the newsletters are compiled, and published on time, that the pastor's diary does not have duplicate bookings, nor that he is overloaded, but has sufficient time put aside, to commune with God on a daily basis, so he/she, are always in tune with God's plan and purpose for the Body of Christ.
"[And finally] diversities of tongues": Last on the list, is the recognition that tongues are still part of God's plan and purpose for the Body of Christ today. It did not die out with the first-generation church, nor will it die out, until the Holy Spirit leaves the earth at the time of the rapture, because the Holy Spirit dwells within us.
So, for those denominations who do not allow tongues in corporate worship, you are professing just one thing. **The rapture has already come – and you have been left behind!!!**
So, to you I say this: Wake up out of your sleep, study the scriptures once again, and earnestly pray for the Holy Spirit (which is still here in 2010 on the earth) to "lead you into all truth!!!
So, what do we do now?
Based upon these scriptures there is a spiritual template of leadership to be put in place in the Body of Christ.
Here in Australia, we were given a chance to put this in place when Billy Graham first came to Australia in 1948 to preach revival, salvation, and a return to God's plan and purpose for the church within Australia.
Did the religious hierarchy in 1948 listen and acknowledge this for Australia? NO! Because it was a message they did not want to hear, and for those who did actually hear it – it went deep down into their spirits, and tormented their spirits and their consciences.
What did it mean for them? It meant that they would have to give up their "man appointed offices" and pray for God to raise up "spiritually appointed men" in their place. This did not happen and that is why the revival of 1948 only lasted 3-4 years and died out.
Billy Graham came back in 1959 to Sydney, and again in 1979, and I was at both rallies. Here again, Billy Graham preached salvation, revival, and a return to Godly governance.
Many people accepted Christ at these rallies, and went on the follow Jesus Christ for the rest of their lives – but did the governance of the Body of Christ change? NO!
Three times, God has sent His messenger to this nation, to enlighten us from His word, and to encourage His Body here in the nation, to follow His spiritual template for governance of the Body of Christ.
Three times we have turned our backs on God's messengers and His word.
In 1984 Leighton Ford came to Australia for a series of rallies, once again I was part of that team, and spent almost a whole year preparing for that revival series, and preparing the choir in Coffs Harbour for that revival.
47 churches up and down the coast, from all different denominations, studied the same book entitled: "In the Spirit of Love" and miraculously came up with the same spiritual answers.
There was a level of unity in the Body of Christ, which had never been experienced before. People were invited, to go and attend services in other churches. Pastors were encouraged to open their pulpits to priests and pastors, from other denominations, and to preach from the Word of God. Guess what?
IT WAS FOUND THAT WE ALL BELIEVED IN THE SAME JESUS CHRIST. HE DIED ON THE CROSS FOR ALL OF US!!!
Churches who had never heard the gift of tongues, began to experience them in their own churches. Healings and miracles were in abundance. The Body of Christ became alive!!!

In 10 days of crusades in Coffs Harbour alone, more than 1100 people made decisions for Jesus Christ.
This was an opportunity for the Body of Christ, right across Australia, to receive the anointing of the Holy Spirit, the revelation of His Word, and to implement His placement of persons of the 5-fold ministries within the Body of Christ.
Unfortunately, for the fourth time, the Body of Christ in Australia rejected His Word, and the unity which was experienced prior to, and during the crusades faded away.
Now in 2010, the Body of Christ has another opportunity to re-examine God's word, hear His distinct voice through the scriptures, listen to the Holy Spirit, who has promised to "lead us into ALL TRUTH", and set in place, the correct leadership template within the Body of Christ, for each region, each state and for the nation.
God is not looking for a glorious denomination. **God is looking for a united Body of Christ,** without barriers, without fences, all worshipping to the same tunes, to the same music, because they are all of the same spirit – **in one accord**.
God is not looking for quantity. **God is looking for quality and maturity within the Body of Christ.**
In Hebrews chapter 6: verses 1 & 2 the writer clearly tells us that we have to put aside **"childish ideas"** (the milk of the Word) and move on to a more mature understanding of God's word.
Verse 3: **BUT** – we will not move on, unless God allows it to take place. God has to give us permission to become more mature, by the evidence in our faith and actions, as disciples, within the Body of Christ.
If we don't pass the test, we will continually remain in "spiritual kindergarten." Whose fault will that be? ***The leadership in place in the church today!***
Remember: **God's word says quite clearly that God judges those in leadership more harshly than others.**
So, to the Leadership in the Churches in Toowoomba, the rest of Queensland, and the rest of Australia. How are you going to give an account of yourselves, before the Master, about keeping the Body of Christ as "spiritual kindergarten students" – instead of leading them to a higher level of maturity, in Christ Jesus, so that they can receive all the promises and blessings, of the scripture which should be available to them????
Now you may want to kill me for what I have written. OK, but that will not change the fact that I am quoting God's word, and you really have to deal with Him ~ not me.
He is the author and the finisher of His word. It is to Him that you (and I) are to be held accountable to.
The choice, and the challenge, is now up to you. What are you going to do about it???

CHAPTER 58: WHEN IS JESUS CHRIST COMING BACK?

There are many scriptures in the Old and New Testaments about Jesus Christ and his authority, which include that "he was at creation, and that nothing was made without his involvement".

In the gospels, his disciples asked him when he was coming back to earth to establish his kingdom, and Jesus replied that no one knows the day, nor the hour that Jesus is to return, **except his father who is in heaven.** This statement was made by Jesus ***before he went to the cross***.

After his resurrection, Jesus said in Matthew 28, verses 18-20 that **all authority in heaven and on earth, has now been given to him;** Go therefore and make disciples in all nations, teaching them all that I have told you. Then Jesus promised that he would be with them even until the end of the age.

So, if all authority in heaven and earth has been given by the Father to Jesus, who is now making the decisions in heaven? The obvious answer is that Jesus in now making the decisions in heaven.

This argument is reinforced in the Book of Acts when Jesus commanded his disciples in Acts 1:8. For you shall have power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you shall be ***my witnesses*** in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the uttermost parts of the earth.

Here Jesus is clearly exercising this authority. He did not say you shall be my Father's witnesses, but that you shall be **my witnesses**.

This now brings us to the question which is floating around the Internet and other social media outlets; **"when is Jesus coming back"?**

The first thing we must establish about this question is; "when is Jesus coming back the **second** time ~~ or the **third** time"?

After the ascension of Jesus into the clouds, the disciples saw two angels, who said to them; ***"that as you saw Jesus ascending in the clouds, so you shall see him when he returns" (the next time)*.** That will be the second **"appearing"** of Jesus Christ. He will **"appear in the clouds"**. [Acts 1:9-11]

In 1 Corinthians 15:50-53 it says: ***I tell you this my brothers; an earthly body made of flesh and blood cannot get into God's kingdom. These perishable bodies of ours are not the right kind to live forever. But I am telling you this strange and wonderful secret; we shall not all die, but we shall be all given new bodies! It will all happen in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, when the last trumpet is blown. For there will be a trumpet blast from the sky and all the Christians who have died will suddenly become alive, with new bodies that will never, never die; and then we who are still alive shall suddenly have new bodies too. For our earthly bodies, the ones we have now that can die, must be transformed into heavenly bodies that cannot perish, but will live forever.***

In 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 it says; ***For the Lord Himself will come down from heaven with a mighty shout, and with the soul-stirring cry of the archangel and the great trumpet-call of God. And the believers who are dead will be the first to rise to meet the Lord. Then we, who are still alive and remain on the earth, will be caught up with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and remain with him forever. So, comfort and encourage each other with this news.***

When this happens, Jesus will defy, time, space, and death, by appearing at every place on earth **<u>at the same instant</u>** (even though places on the earth are in different time zones). He will appear out of nowhere, and everyone will all see Him (whether they believe he exists or not!)

The fact that the dead in Christ shall rise, proves his power over sin and death. The fact that each one of these people receive new bodies, (instantly ~ out of nothing) clearly shows that he has control over creation.

As it says in the song; *"two men walking up a hill, one disappears and ones' left standing still, I wish we'd all been ready".*

Scientists and sceptics will have a hard time explaining what is happening unless they conclude the truth ~~ that Jesus has indeed has been "revealed in the clouds", just as the Bible, stated it would happen.

So, now we have the saints all up in heaven with Jesus, to take part in the marriage ceremony, of the Bride, (His Church), with the Bridegroom, Jesus Christ, in the presence of His Father, and all of the angels, as witnesses to this historic event ~ **"a once in an eternity event."**

So, we are now part of his kingdom in heaven; the next question is when will Jesus return to this earth, to commence his reign upon this earth for 1,000 years?

I think the secret is revealed to Apostle John in the Book of Revelation. In Revelation chapter 6 we are now into the Tribulation Hour.

In the Gospel of Matthew 24:9-13 Jesus makes the following statement: ***Then you will be tortured, and killed, and hated, all over the world, because you are mine, and many of you shall fall back into sin, and betray and hate each other. And many false prophets will appear and lead many astray. Sin will be rampant everywhere, and will cool the love of many. But those enduring to the end shall be saved.***

As a result, there will be many martyred for the name of Jesus Christ. These are the martyred Jews and Gentiles, who have become believers during the Tribulation period, as a result of the 144,000 Jewish Messianic evangelists, who go throughout the whole world proclaiming that Jesus Christ is indeed the Messiah, foretold of by the Old Testament prophets.

This statement in Matthew is prophetic ~~ ***looking forward in time***. In Revelation chapter 6, we are looking at the same event, ***but now it is looking back at this event***, which has already taken place.

In verse 9, Apostle John sees a plan view of heaven, with the throne above, then underneath the throne, the martyrs crying out to Jesus.

Now paraphrasing the conversation that the martyrs have with Jesus as follow; "Lord, when are you going to go back to earth, and sort out those people who killed us"?

Jesus replies; "patience, give them all white robes, and please wait a little while longer, because there are still more servants who are to be martyred. **I am not going back until the last drop of martyrs' blood has been shed".**

Now we know that Jesus knows the end from the beginning, otherwise he would not have been able to complete the Book of Revelation for Apostle John. Therefore, Jesus already knows the name of the last martyr. Once this last martyr has been killed, then it will be the trigger to open the portal in heaven and for Jesus, (now as the Lion of Judah) to return physically to earth, with His bride to take his place in his kingdom here on earth. (Rev. 19:12-16)

Are you ready?